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The Rising of the Moon

PROPHETS may be without honour in their own country, and outside it, yet it occasionally happens that the whirligig of time, or the revolutions of fickle fortune, gives them their revenge on those who with a stiff neck and a proud lip have despised and ridiculed the prophetic sayings. Not so very long ago the word "Federalism" was seldom heard in connection with the politics of these islands. The idea was laughed at by Englishmen of all parties, and the small clique who gave their attention to it in the press, or on the platform, were held in little esteem and less honour by the great mass of the English public. Federalism, however, is now being seriously put forward by the Liberals in connection with the Home Rule Bill, and the English Tories have assented that "pending a Federal settlement" Ulster, or at least a portion of that province, should be excluded from the operation of the Government measure. The idea suggested to the Irish Home Rule mind would appear to be that Federalism is something about



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which no difference of opinion exists, and that it can be brought to pass in a comparatively short period.

No doubt, Federalism is becoming, and will tend yet more to become—provided no great war intervenes—the dominant issue in contemporary British politics; but between the period when it becomes that issue and the period when it definitely wins or loses there will stretch, in all probability, many a long year. England will not easily reconcile herself to any sound measure of Federalism, because her acceptance of the system must deprive her of her present dominating position within the Empire. At present she is able to say with perfect truth—"The Empire: it is I." Assuredly, it is not without cause that her unquestioned ascendancy has been "glossed" by Lord Rosebery's neat verbal invention of "The Predominant Partner."

It is important to remember that there is no British Empire in the sense that there is a German Empire and an Austrian Empire. There are vast British dominions having no control of British policy. "British" policy is really English policy. Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Canada, Australia, South Africa, India, etc.—these countries, though together constituting what is called the "British" Empire, have not, nor ever had, individually or collectively, any direct or practical control of the policy by which the Empire is governed. England, and England alone, shapes and controls the Imperial policy.

There is, of course, what is called an "Imperial Parliament" sitting in London, but in this legislature the Empire outside the United Kingdoms has no voice whatever. That Parliament, which is really an English

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assembly, controls the navy and the army, the funds, and the foreign policy of the Empire. If it to-morrow decided on a war with Germany, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and every other part of the Empire would be forced into that war, even though they should all disapprove of it. The trade and commerce of the dominions and colonies, and the lives and property of the people inhabiting them, would be exposed to every conceivable risk and loss attendant on war, in the event of England deciding to embark on hostilities. In the so-called "Imperial" Parliament, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are supposed to be co-rulers with England. But how does this popular fiction work out? The Parliament consists of two Houses. In the Upper House, England has a majority of 500 votes. In the Lower House, the same country has a majority of 260 votes over the united representation of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The "Empire" as a political fact is thus the "Predominant Partner." As for the non-represented units—the dominions and colonies—they are allowed no voice or say in the "Imperial" Parliament at all!

The British Empire is to-day the most centralised political system in the civilised world, and as such it is the very antithesis of Federalism. To reconstruct that Empire on a Federal basis would not be to make an interior alteration. To achieve this result would be equivalent to razing the house and rebuilding it on a new foundation. Tinkering and half-measures would not do. It must be a new Imperial domicile from top to bottom.

Many patriotic and far-seeing Englishmen are,

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however, of opinion that this laborious and extremely difficult task must be undertaken in the interests of England herself. But, so far, the necessity of Federalising the Empire would not appear to be apparent to the majority of the English people—the very people, that is to say, who alone can inaugurate and undertake it, since they alone have the power to bring it to a successful conclusion; and the probability is that nothing short of a bloody revolution, an unsuccessful war, or long years of bitter political strife would suffice to open their eyes to the vital importance of a Federated Empire. To the English “man in the street,” the Empire would appear to be a thing which exists for his own particular benefit. Its white inhabitants, outside these islands, are not much considered, whilst its “coloured” population is held to consist merely of “niggers.” Expressed in more discreet language, this view is that held by the majority of English politicians. Since the Boer War the more astute of these have recognised that the Empire as it exists at present is not a permanently tenable institution; but the first English statesman who bells the cat—who tells the English public that for the future England must step down and stand in equal line within the Empire with the Colonial and the coloured population of the British possessions—will probably be swept out of public life on the top of a wave of crescendo Jingoism. Every knowledgeable English political leader knows this, but none is in a hurry to offer himself as the patriotic sacrifice. And when, to still the storms of partisan feeling, the responsible leaders of political opinion in

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England mention the word "Federalism," and announce that they "await a Federal solution" of Imperial difficulties, the English voter listens unmoved, regarding such language as a mere trick to shelve Irish Home Rule, or to "water it down" so as to render it a little more acceptable to an electorate which is either indifferent or actually hostile to it. The English politician endeavours to gild the pill of Federalism by speaking of it as a scheme which would be applied to solve the existing difficulties of the United Kingdoms. He seems to forget that it would not be possible to federate what is called the "United Kingdom," without also federating the whole of the British Empire. Perhaps, however, he does not forget. The magnitude of the task which confronts him causes him to take refuge in discreet silence as to its larger aspects.

The principle of Federalism, however, will be reluctantly conceded by the English voter when he is convinced that it is the only thing which stands between himself and the destruction of the Empire. How many years it will take to persuade him to assent to this principle may be roughly estimated by considering the number of years required to convince the *minority* of the English electorate that Home Rule is a desirable minor political change in the interests of England herself! The majority of that electorate is opposed to Home Rule, which may yet be carried over their heads by Scots, Irish, and Welsh votes—in defiance of English wishes as unequivocally expressed at the polls. But the federation of the whole Empire is an entirely different thing. The dominions and

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colonies would have to be consulted, and a working measure of agreement of opinion could only be obtained after many years of active propaganda. Even after the ground had been cleared by an authoritative mandate, such as would be necessary if Federalism of the Empire is to vacate its arm-chair and step into the arena of practical politics, the difficulties in the way of giving effect to the universal wish would be enormous. One wonders if those who glibly talk and write of Federalism have really studied the objections to the plan which they recommend with so much light-hearted gusto?

Federalism accepted as a principle involves the representation of the whole of the British dominions—at all events so far as these are white or Indian—in an Imperial Parliament meeting in London, and controlling foreign policy, the navy and the army, if not other departments which might reasonably be considered as belonging to the Imperial service. No doubt, England would try to preserve her ascendancy in that assembly, and no doubt also the other constituent members of the Empire would be opposed to her supremacy. If this Imperial Parliament were to consist of 100 members, England would do her level best to secure that her representation should consist of 60 Englishmen. She would seek an absolute majority, and the settlement of the proportion of representation would involve a long and a bitter struggle.

Apart, however, from this—supposing that the principle of Federalism were candidly and speedily conceded, and England agreed to accept her place in it as the strongest single power, but not *the* power—

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the difficulties of federating the British Empire would still be enormous. Since her conquest by the Normans in 1066 England has been based on Centralism—an explanation as well of her early strength in dealing with countries like Scotland and Ireland and France (which were too loosely Federal), as of her weakness at the present time. England has been the world's apostle of Centralisation, and to the acceptance of her teaching by kings and ambitious nations, dazzled by the material eminence to which she has attained, may be traced the source of the conflict between Nationalism and Imperialism which has been raging in Europe for more than a century, and is about to end in the triumph of the Federal principle; for it is only by way of Federalism that Nationalism and Imperialism can be brought to dwell together in comparative peace and harmony. To the doctrine of Centralisation, with its sordid material philosophy corrupting and lowering the soul of man whilst it professes a calculating concern for the body, France must ascribe the loss of her provincial parliaments and her present weakness; Spain must attribute her feebleness and disgrace; and Italy her veiled impotence. So long as France is Paris—instead of Normandy and Brittany, Gascony and Burgundy—France will remain weak. Spain, so long as she attempts to be Spain only through Madrid, will be what she is to-day and no more; and so long as Italy deliberately confounds herself with her ancient capital—just so long will that "Great" Power be a Great Power *pour rire*. Centralisation in a nation or an empire there must be; but the Centralisation which makes of a nation or an

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empire merely one city or one state, with the rest of its component parts acting as mere train-bearers to it, will, and must, in the long run overbalance, and so destroy that nation or that empire. The Celts of these islands and of the Continent recognised this truth. Their political system was a Federal one; but the mistake which they made was in allowing too much freedom to the Federal principle, with the result that in the course of centuries their Federalism ran looser than was consistent with national or Imperial safety. This weakness of the Federal system, as practised by the Celts, enabled Julius Cæsar to overrun and conquer Celtic Gaul, and to drag the great patriot and statesman, Vercingetorix, to a Roman triumph. Nearly two thousand years, however, after Gaul had fallen defying Cæsar, Germany reproduced in her empire the Celtic system. Between the German Empire of to-day and the ancient Celtic Empire of which Ireland formed the western and Galatia in Asia Minor the eastern limit, there is no political difference save in respect of the degree to which Centralisation obtains in the former Empire. All the states of Germany are free and independent, all submit to a common head as regards affairs that concern the Empire as whole, and all have a voice in the decision of these questions. Ancient Celtia is politically reproduced in modern Germania, which shows no signs whatever of weakening in her attachment to the system which she supports, though as an observer of other systems of government she can claim an experience extending over many hundreds of years. The central authority of the German Empire is wisely

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made stronger than the Celts made it, but otherwise the two systems are the same.

Apart, however, from its being totally foreign to the English mind, the Federalisation of the British Empire would be a task of far greater difficulty than the Federalisation of Germany would be, supposing that that empire was not already Federated but wished to become so. The British Empire is not a geographical unit, nor is it one by virtue of race. It has no homogeneity, in spite of much vain newspaper talk about the "Anglo-Saxon," and the "Anglo-Saxon races" (*sic*). Its possessions are scattered over the face of the globe, and are, racially considered, extremely mixed. Its positive interests are diverse, and vary according to the respective aims and aspirations of its sections, whilst its negative interests, equally diverse and numerous, give no promise of help whatever as building or consolidating forces. The Empire has no common ideal. It is at once oriental and occidental—white and black and brown and parti-coloured. To bind it by the chain of a common interest would be a formidable task: to give it a common ideal would be another labour of Hercules. Yet, the seemingly impossible must be faced and accomplished, if the British Empire is to endure for more than the three or four hundred years which is the greatest span of life which any discerning person will be disposed to accord to it. And, together with these things, there is another which must be undertaken. The several parts of the Empire must be linked together by means of an invincible navy. The German—even the Austro-Hungarian—Empire might

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suffer the annihilation of fleet and commerce, and still remain in being and rise again. But once the fleet of a Federated British Empire were destroyed, the Empire itself would automatically fall to pieces.

That it would be possible to give what is now called the British Empire a new lease of life through the channel of Federalism is an exceedingly doubtful proposition at best. The difficulties are enormous, and what makes them appear still more gigantic than perhaps they really are, is that there is no living Englishman equal to facing and overcoming them. Further, it would appear to be the fact that there is no living English statesman possessed of sufficient courage and patriotism to essay to face them. The talk of Federalism, therefore, in connection with the present political *impasse* is moonshine—a mere dodge to get an English political party out of the difficulties in which its own folly and blunders have involved it. The English Liberal party has obviously not reckoned the cost of genuine Federalism, or plumbed the depths of the difficulties that must confront any statesman or political organisation that is desirous to make the Federation of the Empire a plank in its platform. Consequently, the attempt of this party to draw the red-herring of Federalism across the path of Irish Home Rule is not an honest one, and, if persisted in, in the casual and haphazard fashion in which the idea has been *suggested* by the leaders and their organs in the press, is certain to be resented by the electorate who do not regard it at all seriously. The English Tories, on the other hand, are equally the victims of their innumerable follies and the incon-

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ceivable blunders of their singularly incompetent leaders. They have deliberately chained themselves to the gates of Unionism and Centralisation, and as they possess as leaders only Balfour and Bonar Law, and have nothing better in prospect apparently, it is not in the least degree likely that they, as a party, will be released from their impotent and uncomfortable situation for many a year to come. Under the circumstances, therefore, in which the two great English parties are placed as regards men and as regards measures, he would be a rash man and more than commonly sanguine who should say that the prospects of Imperial Federation are bright.

Meantime, the comedy of errors known as the Irish question maintains its reputation as a first-class feeder to the gaiety of the universe, and its kaleidoscopic changes and revolutions increase from day to day in so bewildering and rapid a manner that writers to the periodical press must needs be sorely put to it in order to bring their criticisms and observations up to something resembling up-to-dateness. Personally, I would give not a little, if, even for a brief space only, a halt could be cried in this respect, and a truce declared to this surfeit of a never-ending feast of fun. But, setting aside this pious wish as being something altogether unattainable at present, it seems to me that the leading feature of this extraordinary controversy has been, so far, the "dishing of the Whigs" by Sir Edward Carson and his volunteers. The English must surely be a nation altogether destitute of the smallest sense of humour if they cannot see how supremely ridiculous Carson and his men have made the Liberal Party to

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appear in the eyes of the whole of Europe. I see little indication in their press that this view of the matter has occurred to the English public, but, singular as it may seem in view of the Irish reputation for wit, that portion of Ireland which has not risen with the "uncrowned King" has shown an equal want of appreciation of the humours of the situation. There is no disguising the fact that, were it not for the Ulster volunteers, the difficulties and embarrassments of the English Government would have been reduced by half, if not to an even lower quantity. From the Carson point of view "armed resistance" to Home Rule has, therefore, been completely justified of its ingenious promoters and begetters, and I say this deliberately in spite of my admiration for Mr Norman Angell and all his works. The Carson triumph of "physical force" is then the outstanding fact—and one which contains plenty of the elements of humour—of the present political situation so far as it concerns Home Rule, but there is even more (and things yet more mirth-provoking) to bear in mind in this connection. The English Government has been held up and made to look in foreign eyes, if not in those of its own people, still more foolish by reason of the fact that it is a *Celtic* "army" which has wrought this humorous deed. Gradually and little by little it is being recognised that Ulster is a preponderatingly Celtic province, and in consequence of recent investigations into the past of that part of Ireland, we hear in the English press much less than we used to do about "our Ulster kith and kin," and the supposed Teutonic origin of the Ulster Scot. Dr

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Woodburn in his recent book *The Ulster Scot* has gone closely into this interesting question, and emerges with the conviction that Ulster is quite as Celtic as the rest of Ireland. The Scots who entered the northern province in such large numbers between 1603 and 1700 belonged mainly to Strathclyde and Galloway, which if not the most Celtic part of Scotland is certainly amongst the least Teutonic. Dr Woodburn's views have of course come as a kind of shock to many organs of the English press, as for party reasons it is not desirable that the predominatingly Celtic character of the rebellious province should be made a matter of common knowledge. The English *Times*, though it does not seek to combat Dr Woodburn's conclusions outright, tries to render them as dubious as possible, and other English newspapers have followed suit. "Dr Woodburn's description of the Lowland Scot as a Celt," says the *Times*, "is, we need not say, highly disputable." Personally, I should have thought that considering his past history, nothing could well be plainer than that the origin of the Scottish Lowlander is predominately Celtic—at all events it is certainly predominately non-Teutonic—though he doubtless has a dash of Teutonic blood in his veins, as have the French, the northern Italians, the Spanish, and in fact all the peoples now inhabiting the vast territories formerly conquered and settled by the Goths and Ostrogoths. But it is interesting to observe how the *Times* writer seeks to belittle Dr Woodburn's conclusions. "Sir Walter Scott and Andrew Lang had (it says) another opinion." Well, what if they had? Sir Walter was not an ethnologist or a

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biologist, but a novelist, and even if he had been learned about racial matters (which he was not) his views would not be worth much nowadays. As for the late Andrew Lang, though that writer was a man of wide, if in some respects superficial reading, he was never taken seriously by those scientists who made, and are making, a single life-long study of Celtic problems. Dr Woodburn's conclusions are carefully based on the latest findings of the best Celtic scholarship collated in conjunction with his own private investigations, and my belief is that it will take more than a long deceased novelist, a defunct literary *dilettante*, and the *Times* writer to move—much less to overturn—them.

Whatever may be the result of the present Home Rule imbroglio, I think that posterity will agree that Mr Asquith made a serious mistake in not suppressing the Ulster resistance long before it reached its present formidable dimensions. The Celts of Ulster have now only to "sit tight" in order to gain, if not the whole, at all events the major part of their aims. In other words, Mr Asquith and the Liberal Government have allowed them to creep into a position from which it would be impossible to dislodge them, without offering them "concessions" of sufficient immediate and potential value completely to justify, in the eyes of Ulster, her bold and ingenious recourse to "physical force." Probably Mr Asquith, a statesman of outstanding ability, foresaw and feared just such a result, but the poison of the Whig system has proved too much and too strong for him and his party. Whatever character that creed may formerly have borne,

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it is not now a living *political* principle. It is a *temperament*—an attitude of mind—which infects and weakens not only the English Liberals (who are its direct heirs) but also the English Unionists, who starting from a very different basis, have been drawn into its vortex—a movement which began, so far as they are concerned, as soon as they discarded the principle of Divine Right, and accepted the rule of the House of Hanover. A result of this Whig temperament, to whose influence both English parties have succumbed in almost equal degree, is seen in Mr Asquith's playing with—there is really no other word suitable to describe his conduct—the Ulster question. The Whig temperament commits those who surrendered to its influence to a policy of "wait-and-see," and to a principle of "peace-at-any-price." In dealing with Celts, this is a fatal policy. They simply do not understand it, and despise it as much as they are mystified by it. The moral weakness and softness of the Liberals was seized upon by Sir Edward Carson and his friends, who well knew that in gripping hold of the "impossibility" of civil war—a creed to which the English electorate is definitely committed by principle as well as by inclination and temperament—he grasped practically all the honours of the cards in his own hands. That he should have improved this initial advantage as he has done is very much to his own credit and that of those who are associated with him in his present undertaking. And, however unpleasant the out-of-date bigotry of the Ulster people may be to Catholic Ireland, the rest of the provinces should rejoice and laugh to see a Celtic "army" holding

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up an English party, and practically dictating terms to the Saxon Government. The Home Rule Bill itself was never worth fighting for; and when it has been subjected to the whittling process which Carson and his volunteers are determined to apply to it, it will not be worth, from the Nationalist point of view, the paper on which it has been written. Let Catholic Ireland then temporarily borrow a leaf from the book of modern temperamental Whiggism, and "wait and see." Whatever comes out of the present agitation the Celt stands to gain, in reputation on account of the virility and vigour of his methods, if not by means of the immediate triumph of the "lesser policy" which underlies his larger and more ambitious aims.

A few words more by way of conclusion. Though the Carson campaign has its humorous side, it should not be without grave lessons to all the Celts of these isles. The weakness of the Celts has always consisted in their propensity to faction, which they generally indulged in the more they were threatened by foreign attack and conquest. If Vercingetorix had been properly supported by his Gauls, the probability is that he would have destroyed Cæsar instead of being destroyed by that able but unscrupulous tyrant. But when there was most need for union, the Celts of Gaul suffered private feuds, intertribal animosities, and criminal jealousy of outstanding genius to defeat the best measures laid for the triumph of their threatened liberties. The example of Vercingetorix is not an isolated one. The history of the Celtic peoples abounds in deplorable instances of such national blunders and

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crimes, and it may safely be said that to this cause, and to this cause alone, the Celts owe their present dependent position in these isles—isles which formerly owed their sway, and in the appellations "Britain," "Ireland," and "Scotland" still bear their name. The Ulster volunteer movement, therefore, since it denotes the existence of a bitter private quarrel, is not altogether a thing *pour rire* from the Celtic point of view. It has for us its grave as well as its humorous side. It affords striking evidence that the Celts as a whole have not yet learned the lessons of a lengthy and tedious adversity. They are still prone to turn their arms against one another, when they should be concerting measures of a very different character. They are still disinclined to sink private feuds, animosities, and jealousies in the common weal, and to stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of their common interests, if not their common aims. The North of Ireland dreads the loss of its ancient coveted ascendancy, and so has armed. The perfervid Celtic imagination of Ulster has recalled His Holiness the Pope to his temporal throne, and so is breathing fire and slaughter. The rest of Ireland—out for a trumpety bubble in the shape of Asquith's apology for a Home Rule measure, and enraged and disgusted by Carson's tall talk about "Popery" and ascendancy—is threatening reprisals, and imagining the conquest of Ulster, if the Catholic provinces do not get their own way. Thus, the situation of Gaul in the time of Vercingetorix is reproduced, more or less, in the Ireland of to-day. Rival Celtic forces furiously face one another, and bloodshed will once more be done as between Celt and Celt, and every lesson

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of a lengthy and troublous history cast to the winds, unless indeed the boasted Irish sense of humour supervenes in the majority, and unless North becomes reconciled to South on the basis of some accommodation which shall be the result, not of outside pressure and foreign wire-pulling, but of a sense of the homogeneity of race, and a real identity of interests. Thus does the grave side of modern Celtic politics struggle for the upper hand with the humorous. The Celts as a whole should be grateful to Carson and his volunteers for having vindicated in so striking and signal a manner the virility, "dash," resource, and well-known martial qualities of their race. For their success we owe him much thanks. One and all of us will agree in wishing more power to his elbow. But however grateful to him for these reasons we may be, and however much the humorous side of the present imbroglio may appeal to us, as well as to foreign observers and critics, there is serious danger that the game may be carried too far, and that modern times may witness a revival of the bloody and furious animosities which of old tore asunder and divided our race, and so left them an easy prey to the wiles and the arts of the conqueror. May the God of battles and the fates that preside over the destinies of Common Sense clarify our national vision, and unite the Celtic race so as to enable it to defeat the measures, and to disappoint the designing expectations of all its enemies!

J. M.

Bannockburn

HE question of the size of some of the great armies of antiquity has recently been exercising the Teutonic mind. Amongst others, Professor Hans Delbrück, of the University of Berlin, has come forward as an authority on "Numbers in History," a subject which he regards as "of the greatest historical importance." We are asked to believe that the army of 700,000 men which Attila is said to have led over the Rhine into the plain of Châlons is an obvious fabrication of the chroniclers, because Moltke experienced the greatest difficulty in conducting 500,000 soldiers over the same road. The great armies of olden times—those of the Assyrians, Persians, Gauls, Huns, Germans, etc.—are indiscriminately regarded by Professor Delbrück as representing artificially inflated quantities. He has calculated that the van of the army of Xerxes, which, according to Herodotus, numbered 5,100,000 souls, including servants and the usual miscellaneous train of non-combatants which accompanied the Asiatic hosts, could only have arrived before Thermopylae about the same time as the rear-guard was leaving Susa beyond the Tigris.

There is probably a good deal of justification for this destructive sort of criticism. The tendency of the

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historians and chroniclers to exaggerate the numbers, military skill, and the bravery of the troops vanquished by their respective "nationals" is both likely and pardonable, and may safely be conceded. And in ages less critical than our own, and less well supplied with the means of conducting any calculations where large numbers were involved, we need not be surprised if, on many notable occasions, patriotism took advantage of primitive methods and machinery, in order to exaggerate the importance of national exploits of the character which we are here considering. Nevertheless, though there may be not a little to be said in support of Professor Delbrück's thesis and arguments, yet we should not allow our admiration for his industry and ingenuity to carry us too far along the road of scepticism which he is evidently desirous that we should travel in his agreeable and diverting company. Recollection of the immense armies which the Russians and the Japanese discovered themselves to be respectively capable of moving and victualling during the progress of the recent war, should put us on our guard against being in too great a hurry to endorse all the Professor's revolutionary speculations.¹ Doubtless there was, as to the numbers comprising the armies of old, exaggeration in many cases. For instance, we are hardly required to believe at this time of day, that the army of Xerxes was as numerous a host as Herodotus states that it

¹ To the salvation of Italy King Theodoric moved 200,000 men, but these figures take no account of women, children, and other non-combatants. Professor Delbrück seems to forget that Goths and Huns and other barbarians transplanted *nations*, as well as armies, in their famous waggons.

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was. The Greeks have frequently been suspected of exaggerating the "numbers of history," with a view to exposing their own patriotism and valour in a light still more favourable than that which is to be obtained from an impartial consideration of the true facts of their story. Again, though the ancient historians may, like other people, occasionally have been moved to "draw the long bow," yet it would be manifestly as unjust as it would be absurd to regard them all, on that account, as unreliable witnesses to the truth. The Germans are prone to carry their zeal for thoroughness and detail a little too high. In industriously pursuing the gnat, they often come into abrupt and disastrous collision with the camel. "Numbers in history" may well be a matter of "the greatest historical importance"; but even supposing that some of the facts are, as our Professor and others have adumbrated their existence, we crave the critics' pardon for reminding them that, whether they are so or not, the mere figures are not now of sufficient importance to affect, one way or the other, the verdict of the events with which they are associated.

In our own country, a somewhat similar tendency to scepticism has been manifested of late years. Paradoxically enough, corrosive criticism of the historical kind seems to flourish on the same soil with that which supplies the raw material for the pail of the historical "white-washer." Thus, whilst one author will be setting out to prove to us that black in the shape of, say, "Bluidy Mackenzie," is really white, another will be simultaneously girding up his loins with the object of showing that St

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Columba is a myth, or Wallace a half-dozen of heroes rolled into one by the popular imagination. Even Bannockburn has been scrutinised through spectacles, which, if not actually "made in Germany," bear a remarkable resemblance to those which adorn the nose of Professor Delbrück of Berlin. A Scottish author of parts has come to the conclusion, in a work recently published, that the Scots army at that battle did not number more than 20,000 men. We used to be required by our historians to believe that, at the lowest computation, 30,000 Scots fought for freedom and national independence on that ever memorable occasion.¹ By this considerable discrepancy, however, the political results of the battle can be in no wise minimised, nor is the justifiable pride with which the Scottish nation has always regarded Bannockburn in any danger of being brought low by reason of the smaller figures. Indeed, we here refer to the subject—expressing no opinion as to the authenticity or the reverse of the amended computation—merely for the purpose of illustrating our contention that the Teutonic critical method and spirit have recently been moving over the face of our own historical waters (and slightly troubling the same), as well as over those which appertain to other nations and peoples. And, as would appear to be the case in regard to certain of the great armies of antiquity, we think that, in some notable cases, the home battalions have been consciously, or unconsciously, unduly swelled by the chroniclers, so as either to

¹ The historian Fraser-Tytler says that Bruce's army numbered "about 40,000" men.

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excuse or palliate defeat in face of overwhelmingly superior numbers, or to enhance the strength and valour of the victorious forces. It is certainly noticeable that the English historians are disposed to overrate the numbers of the Scots, whenever our arms were carried into their country, whenever the Saxons sustained a crushing defeat at the hands of our ancestors, or the Scots were checked or dispersed in their invasions. They are fond of describing our armies as "endless," as "an innumerable host," "a mighty army," and so forth—language of pure exaggeration in many cases, it should seem, if we remember that the army which David I. brought to the field of Northallerton, and which the English chroniclers plentifully bespattered with their grandiloquent epithets, did not number more than 26,000 men. On the other hand, it would be rash to conclude from these figures that armies greater in numbers than the one which David collected to do battle with the English at Northallerton never set out from Scotland, or were received from across the Border into the bosom of our country. A crushing defeat was inflicted on the Angles at Nectan's Mere, yet the circumstance of that great national humiliation did not prevent the contemporary Bernician annalists from describing their army as "mighty." At the fight of Carham, too, large numbers would appear to have been engaged on both sides; and the field of Brunanburgh, so disastrous to Constantine and the Scottish arms, would appear to have received rival armies, whose numbers were as great as their valour was conspicuous.

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Endeavours such as those undertake who go about to compile a list of the great decisive battles of the world, or to furnish a catalogue of the "hundred best books" appear to us to represent a form of industry and ingenuity whose success, at the highest and most favourable computation, can be but partial. No doubt, certain important battles there are which will occur to any one the least learned in history as being indispensable to the compiler's list, just as there are certain great books which no one who can claim to possess any knowledge of the literature of the world, and is minded to furnish an enumeration of the hundred best books, would be prepared to omit from his catalogue of perfections. But in any extended endeavour of the kind contemplated by these remarks, it is obvious that the compiler must soon reach a point at which certainty degenerates into conjecture, and particular views and predilections arise to take the place of those sure guides which are derived from the verdicts of universal applause. We can conceive it as possible that a Scottish compiler should turn to that battle which the people of this country are agreed in considering as the most important one in the history of Scotland, with a view to giving Bannockburn a place in any *extended* list of the decisive battles of the world.¹ In so doing, we are inclined to

¹ A more enlightened public opinion as regards the relative importance of the leading events in the history of our country would probably regard the battle of Nectan's Mere as being more important than even Bannockburn. But the former is "under a cloud," as it were, by reason of the fact that it was fought as long ago as 685. Short views, and not too much of these, are all the vogue nowadays, in and out of school.

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think that our imaginary compiler would have substantial reason on his side. He might plausibly argue that, if Bannockburn had not been gained, national independence would have been lost. If Scotland had been made a province in the year 1314, instead of waiting until the year 1707 in order to acquire that unflattering distinction, it is highly likely that the whole face of European politics, subsequent to the battle, had been changed by reason of her defeat. For our own part, however, we are by no means inclined to embark on any so superfluous and difficult a speculation. We are content to regard the battle of Bannockburn as the undoubted saviour of the independence of our country, and as an event of the first importance in the history of Western Europe. The sex-centenary of the battle will be celebrated this month, and we hope that the public rejoicings which are to mark the occasion will be consonant with the magnitude of the issue which was decided by our arms.

Every great people delights to honour the memory of its illustrious dead; and each nation to which the same epithet can justly be applied, is no less careful to bear in mind those events in its history of which it has most reason to be proud. Sensible people, we imagine, will concur with us in this, that all such events should be soberly and suitably honoured. Of all the various forms which national celebrations take, the honouring the memory of a great battle is, perhaps, the least uninvincible in the list. It is impossible entirely to forget that the victory was purchased at the expense of an adversary's discomfiture; and, however much tact may seek, in the interests of the vanquished, to lighten the

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burden of recollection, or humanity may labour to soften the grim tale of the slain, yet something of resentment and a little of acerbity is usually to be detected in the comments of those who belong to the nation whose defeat must needs be celebrated in the pæans of the victors. On the glorious and ever-memorable occasion of Bannockburn, we chastised and dispersed a powerful and an illustrious antagonist. But, in honouring that event, it should now be nothing to us that that enemy was seeking to conquer us. We should not charge upon contemporaries the crimes and misdemeanours which were washed out, six hundred years ago, in the blood of their ancestors. We hope, therefore, that so far as our neighbours of England are concerned, the coming celebrations will pass off, *gun ghuth mòr no droch fhacal*,¹ as the good Gaelic saying well expresses it. There is no occasion to mingle recrimination with the public recognition of the justice of the national cause, or to celebrate in boastful, theatrical, and flamboyant rhetoric, events whose issue was determined by the stern and simple decision of the sword.

On the other hand, we hope that, at the approaching sex-centenary of the battle of Bannockburn, there will be no public bowing of the knee to the divers Baals which the Unions have been the means of importing into Scotland, and that the politics of the Borestone—a whimsical collection of contradictory and mutually destructive conceits—will not be suffered either to insult the memory of the dead who died in behalf of the national cause, or to embarrass those of the living nation who acknowledge the futility of attempting to

¹ "Without a loud voice or a bad word."

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drive the camel of Nationalism through the eye of the needle of Unionism. The nation should not be invited to go out to see merely the reed of Borestoneism shaken once again by the stale eruptions of the inflated prophets of "Britainism." The cause and the principle which all Scotland united to uphold at Bannockburn, and which the spears of our ancestors carried to victory, was Independence. Our panegyrics and our laurels should be reserved for the full recognition of that fact, and Freedom alone should be the subject of our encomiums. To deprive the celebrations of the significance which belongs to their cause, and to emasculate the demonstrations so as to discount the lessons of the battle—this is conduct of which only a degenerate people could be guilty.



The Scottish Small Landholders Amending Bill



THE Scottish Small Landholders Act has now been in operation for two years, and it is at least possible to appreciate the fact that it has been so far unsuccessful in placing men upon the land. During those years there have been no fewer than 8000 applications for new holdings, or for enlargements of existing holdings, and less than 300 of those applications have been dealt with. It is only fair to make some allowance for this failure in the work contingent upon setting up the machinery of the Act, and making the necessary appointments. When that is done, it still is obvious that some steps are necessary to alter the machinery of an Act which can only produce these disappointing results. The Bill, of which I am fortunate enough as a result of luck in the ballot for private members' Bills to be in charge, attempts to do so.

Experience has shown that the machine is clogged. This is due to two different reasons—one a reason of policy, and the other a defect in machinery. We will deal with policy first. Certain provisions of the original Act make for delay. These are the provisions which impose a duty upon the Board of Agriculture to negotiate with landlords, and which permit a reference

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to arbitration for the purpose of determining compensation.

Both of these have proved capacious quicksands for consuming otherwise valuable time.

The obligation which was laid upon the Board to negotiate with landlords was deliberately devised in the hope that such opportunity would be used in a *bonâ fide* fashion for the purpose of arriving at friendly agreements. It was hoped that the landlord would agree with his adversary while he was in the way with him. Such hopes, however, were very quickly dashed. Instead of providing facilities for agreement, the period of negotiation has only revealed many places from which the landlord could jump out of the Act altogether. All kinds of obstacles have been placed in the way of the Board, who would require to be administrative hurdlers of Olympic games quality to negotiate the same successfully.

It may be that the principal incentive to discover these obstacles lay in the fact that no compensation is payable when small holdings created by agreement happen to fail. Probably it is at any rate a considerable incentive. In any event negotiation has not been the *open sesame* to agreed holdings that was anticipated when the Act was framed. It let Aladdin into the cave, but without the magician's lamp.

If negotiation has proved an obstructive provision, the resort to arbitration has proved disastrous. When the amount of compensation claimed by the landlord exceeds £300, resort may be had to arbitration. The usual practice has been to make use of this provision. Indeed it has become a habit, and if recent happenings

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are any criterion of its success, it is going to prove an expensive habit to every one but the landlord. The method is easily understood. The landlord appeals to the Court of Session, which then appoints an arbiter to hear all parties concerned. These enquiries are miniature railway arbitrations. The wolves of the law descend upon the fold and plunder the public purse. A recent decision leaves the landlord with a larger income than he had prior to the small holdings being erected; a lump sum for compensation for loss of symmetry in his estate; with potential compensation should the small holdings fail; with no expense in maintaining certain buildings which previously he required to maintain; and the contingent possibility of selling his whole estate at some remote period.

It is worth while bearing in mind that the arbiters who determine this compensation are a class of professional men, who in their private capacity depend largely, if not wholly, for employment upon the landlord class. It would be unfair to suggest that this fact is always consciously present in their minds, but surely it may be assumed to exert some kind of natural bias. Another case now in course of being heard raises the question of compensation for loss of control of the estate. Obviously if large sums of public money, which ought to be devoted to getting men on to the land, go into the pockets of people who have the land but don't want the men, a clear case arises for revision of the whole proceedings. It is clearly impossible that a scheme which seeks to bring the man to the land can be materially delayed by protracted and costly legal proceedings, in the course of which preposterous claims can be made by landowners.

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So much for the question of policy. Let us turn next to the question of defective machinery. The Board of Agriculture has proved totally incapable of accomplishing the work imposed upon it. That was recognised in 1913 by the appointment of one additional sub-commissioner and four assistant sub-commissioners, bringing up the total number of officials who could interview applicants or look for suitable land to eight instead of three. Even then the work has been more than these can cope with ; so much so, that force of circumstances have compelled the Board to delay or ignore applications for holdings except under pressure. As for educative work, there has been none. With 8000 applicants knocking at their door, the Board has not sought to find others. Yet everyone knows that were the advantages of the Act understood, particularly in the Border counties, these applications would receive a great addition.

The creation of a few small holdings at Lindean has already stimulated the applications from the Borders. The Scottish ploughman is a shrewd fellow, and prefers to know that he can get land before he applies at all. So far he has been an interested spectator in watching the Board of Agriculture beat a very small bird of small holdings out of a very large bush of applications.

If the Board of Agriculture is insufficiently equipped for its work so is the Land Court. In both cases an unsuccessful attempt is made to squeeze a quart pot into a pint measure. And unfortunately the work is interdependent.

The Board may have its work completed. It must then wait for the Land Court to determine the fair rent. The Court is the neck of the bottle, and only so much

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can come through it at a time. The fuller the bottle is of completed cases the greater is the disappointment of the applicant, who cares neither for the Board nor the Court, but who wants his land.

The Court is an inelastic body. It is limited in numbers, and the size of its quorum renders it more inelastic still. Besides it has other work which is sufficient in itself to occupy its attention. It is, too, a mobile and itinerant Court, and the Board must wait until the Court can be caught in Edinburgh, or play hide-and-seek with it throughout the length and breadth of Scotland.

There are at the present moment no fewer than 700 applications lying on the table of the Court deposited there by the Board. That is twice as many as have been dealt with in two years under the original Act. They might as well be put in plaster of Paris; they couldn't be held up more effectively.

Small wonder, then, that grumbling all over Scotland obtains. Small wonder that an Amending Bill is necessary and urgent.

In stating the reasons for delay, I referred first to that caused by the obligation upon the Board to negotiate with landlords. In order to deal first with the remedies proposed to meet this delay, the new Bill enables the Board of Agriculture to require landlords to furnish them with the dates of expiring leases, and to produce the same when required with any relevant particulars. There have been cases in which, after the Board has conducted certain negotiations, the landlords have relet their land—thus rendering all this effort nugatory. A little less reticence on the part of

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the landlord, and this vexatious delay could be avoided. Three thimbles are an unfair handicap on one pea.

The Board are no longer bound to negotiate. It is left to its discretion. This frees both hands of the Board, and does not invite them to an encounter with one hand tied behind their backs. They may go to the Land Court either before or after negotiation, and obtain authority to prepare a scheme for small holdings. The parties are all heard, and the Court may then either make the order or reject the application. It is, however, specially and specifically provided that such application offers no bar to negotiation. When the scheme is promulgated, the landlord is prevented from letting his land until the issue is determined by the Land Court. Compensation is provided for any loss sustained by the landlord through the operation of this veto.

In cases where agreement is reached between the Board and the landlord, the Board may pay equitable compensation. This ought to avoid the unfortunate experience of the present obligation to negotiate, and should enormously facilitate agreement. There are some critics of this proposal who have in their mind the financial bearings of the device. They urge, and with some force, that these agreed compensations should receive the approval of the Land Court. Their opponents, on the other hand, point out that if such cases are to be reviewed by the Court we do not get rid of delay. It is naturally essential that strict control of such expenditure of public money should be secured, and possibly a *via media* may be found in securing that all such agreements should come before the Court for merely formal ratification. In ninety-nine cases out of

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a hundred the agreements would go through without comment, as the subjects for compensation would soon be standardised. In the hundredth case the Land Court could review the special compensation. This would obviate delay and secure revision of such compensation claims.

From compensation by agreement to compensation by compulsion is an easy transition. It is easier to make the transition in the course of my argument than to make it in my Bill. I have already referred to the undreamt of claims that have emerged in cases for compensation that have been decided. No one wishes to deprive the landlord of such compensation as is his due. But I imagine everyone ought to wish to prevent him being compensated for preposterous and contingent claims, more especially as the latter are particularly remote.

At the moment the landlord has the power to appeal to the Court of Session to appoint an arbiter. The Land Court, however, is itself a judicial body presided over by a judge, and conceivably competent to determine questions of compensation. In my Bill the proposal is made to allow it to do so. It is provided that where damage or injury is done to a landlord, or any other person, in consequence of and directly attributable to holdings, the Land Court requires the Board of Agriculture to pay compensation in respect of such loss after parties have been heard.

In estimating such compensation, the Court are bound to take into consideration everything affecting the interests of the landlord, including all obligations incumbent upon him both before and after the constitu-

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tion of small holdings. In brief, the Land Court shall pay to the landlord such compensation as will leave him in as good a position financially as he was prior to the holdings being set up. There may be—there probably would be—a margin in favour of the landlord; but he would, as he certainly should be, shut out from making such claims as arise, say from such indefinite losses as the loss to the symmetry of the estate.

This proposal will be fought very bitterly. The Land Court is not a popular institution with one of the political parties in Scotland, and the head of the Court has not made himself any more popular by his shrewd *obiter dicta*. Indeed, the chief cause of his offending seems to lie in the fact that he does not distinguish between a landlord's factor and a ploughman.

As far as it can be fairly stated, the position seems to be that on the one hand the Scottish Liberal party are determined that the preposterous claims being set up for compensation shall be broken down; on the other, that whatever body determines the amount of compensation it shall not be the Land Court.

Can a way out of this difficulty be found? What is it that matters? Is it not really the basis of compensation? I am convinced in my own mind that this is the determining factor. Once settle the basis of compensation and it is immaterial who makes the award. Now the material for the basis of compensation should not be difficult to determine. There are certain losses that the landlord may suffer through the creation of small holdings. But they must not be sought in the heavens above, and the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth. It is possible for the owner of an estate to have

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more than his present income secured to him; to be compensated should the experiment fail; to shed certain obligations, thus again improving his income; to receive a large solatium for injured feelings, and the contingent loss at a remote period of a sale of land, which in all probability will never be sold, but will continue to be held in the family. The "moral and intellectual damages" first discovered by the late Ex-President Kruger have been revived with a vengeance by landlords in Scotland. The solacing of these may be left to the parish minister—they certainly ought not to be dealt with by public funds.

Let those, therefore, who are out to secure to the landlords their pound of flesh, tell us what they consider ought to be the basis of compensation, and after discussion let us agree on some basis with, of course, some measure of margin, and we will very speedily get rid of this difficulty.

A special case is made of deer forests in the Bill. In the event of land for small holdings being taken out of existing deer forests, no allowance is to be made in respect of compensation, nor any injury or damage done to its letting value as a sporting subject. In that case only such loss of letting value as appertains to it as an agricultural or pastoral subject is to be taken into account.

In eighteen counties there are altogether 3,599,744 acres of deer forests and land devoted exclusively to sport. The rental in the valuation roll of those acres is £183,788, 2s., or one shilling and one farthing per acre. The case for the proposal needs no further comment, and if it did the argument of Mr Joseph Chamberlain

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makes good the necessity. "If the landlords are unable to develop their property to the best advantage," he once said, "if they cannot perform the obligations which attach to it, then I say they must be taught that their ownership is a trust which is limited by the supreme necessities of the nation, and they must give place to others who will do full justice to the capabilities of the land." What was true then is more true now by the number of the acres since laid down to sport.

These two subjects then—negotiation and arbitration—if dealt with as suggested, cease as they did in the original Act to be prolific sources of delay.

The remainder of the Bill deals mainly with actual mechanical alterations in the machinery of the Act. Each and all of them contribute to the speeding up of the process of getting men on to the land. The Land Court is given an additional member, making its composition six instead of five. The quorum is reduced to two, so that it will be possible to have three effective courts instead of one as at present, when the quorum is three out of five members. There will be three bottle necks instead of one. Further, the Land Court will be able to delegate such of its powers as it thinks expedient to single members, with or without the assistance of assessors; but any order made by any single member is subject to review by three or more members, one of whom must be the chairman. The Board of Agriculture is also better equipped. The maximum number of its members is increased to five instead of three. The Small Holdings Commissioner is abolished. In the past every application has had to pass through his hands.

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Without him the machine stopped. The Bill proposes a business government for the Board. The Secretary for Scotland, its departmental head, its spokesman in the House of Commons, is given full discretion to use any of the members of the Board for the work which lies most to his hand.

It so happens, for example, that the present Small Holdings Commissioner is an expert on forestry. His stereotyped duties confine his energies to small holdings. It is notorious that progress in dealing with the important subject of afforestation in Scotland lags lamentably behind England and Ireland, both of them less suitable subjects for afforestation than Scotland. Moreover, the two subjects go hand in glove. Afforestation means the speeding up of small holdings. An auxiliary industry, it furnishes just what is required and necessary in many counties in Scotland to make small holdings consistently successful. The Bill, therefore, makes the Secretary for Scotland supreme. It gives him the material and the personnel, and leaves to him the initiative and the driving force, both of which qualities Scottish members can keep under observation in the House of Commons.

There are other minor amendments. They deal with the supply of water to small holdings, with pasture lands and grazing, with land within burghs in the crofting counties, with the right of statutory tenants to secure enlargements of their holdings, and with the power to hold land from more than one landlord.

There are many omissions from the Bill, consequent upon the parliamentary necessity not to overcrowd it to such an extent as to have its second reading refused.


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Those that occur most readily to the mind are powers to assist in setting up Land Banks, to promote co-operation among small holders, to furnish instruction to small holders with regard to the cultivation of their holdings, to establish a Forestry Department of the Board of Agriculture, and to define a home farm, etc. These will find an open door in committee, and, indeed, most of them have already received almost unanimous approval from all quarters in the debate on the second reading.

That something drastic requires to be done is self-evident. In 1913 the excess of births over deaths in Scotland was 47,476. In the same year the excess of emigrants over immigrants was 47,167. This means that the net increase in the population of Scotland in 1913 was only 309. That fact ought to arrest the attention of every Scotsman who recalls the history of his country in the past. It emphasises the revelations of the last census, and calls for constant and unremitting zeal on the part of Scotland's representatives to alter the condition of affairs. From all quarters of Scotland there come to us in the House of Commons pathetic letters from men, who state that failing the grant of a small holding they are meditating emigration. From outwith Scotland letters come, not truly in such numbers, but still come asking if land is available should they come back. The hungry villager looks to Parliament for bread, and so far has been given a stone. He will be intensely disappointed if the possibility of his securing bread should be denied him on this occasion.

J. M. HOGGE.

A Diplomatic Loss to Europe

 HERE are some few things which are not to be found in the *Dictionnaire Diplomatique*, and amongst them is, any true, full, and particular account of the beginnings of the diplomatic profession. Diplomacy was, if I may put it so without giving offence, neither made nor begotten—but proceeded. The art or science, as practised to-day, is clearly the result of development. That blessed word “Evolution” will be found sufficient to cover the whole story of its growth and wanderings in the field of human endeavour.

Nothing is easier than to understand how the need for diplomacy arose. If this is, as some contend, the “secretive profession,” its first motions are as clear as day. A, a rich and powerful king of savages, has need of communicating with B, who, we will say, is a ruler similarly circumstanced. Distrustful of his royal brother's intentions, or not himself being able to repair to B's kraal or fig-tree, he sends C, who is his best man. C has eloquence, address, and a respectable knowledge of A's circumstances, and the temper and resources of his kingdom and people. And if we add that C is also a born liar, we shall

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have added to the list of his hypothetical qualifications just that crowning accomplishment which popular superstition requires.¹

In the early days of diplomacy in Europe there were, of course, no such things as fixed Ambassadorial courts. The royal representative was, as it were, an *ad hoc* official, and withdrew from the foreign capital as soon as he had discharged his mission. For this important, though temporary employment, a great nobleman was sometimes chosen, but more commonly the king's choice fell on a leading ecclesiastic. It is easy to understand why this should have been so. The Church monopolised the learning of the times. And just as there could then be no philosophy without a theological basis, so had the art of diplomacy an equal dependence on the Church of the day.

In Scotland, as in other European countries, the early Ambassador was the great ecclesiastic. The universities, which were really theological schools, produced just the type of mind which was needed successfully to grapple with the problems of contemporary international politics. The nobles were, for the most part, sunk in ignorance and barbarism, and only one whose education had been formed in an ecclesiastical mould could be trusted to encounter, on anything like equal terms, intellects which had been similarly trained, and were in a manner addressed beforehand to the quirks and quibbles incidental to the putting on, or

¹ "Ambassadors, a kind of honourable spies, authorised by the mutual jealousy of kings"—so Dr Robertson in his *History of Scotland*. It would be easy to ring many similar changes on the same theme.

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taking off, of what is nowadays styled "diplomatic pressure."¹

The story of Scotland's relations with the outer world may be said to have begun (and ended) with the French Alliance.² This was as much the "great wheel" of her diplomatic machine as Oliver Trant was that of Jacobite politics at the time when Bolingbroke abandoned them in disgust. No doubt, the early relations between *Scotia Major* (Ireland) and *Scotia Minor* (Scotland) were sufficiently close and intimate to justify the belief that there existed some measure of diplomatic correspondence between the two countries. The Gaelic for "ambassador" is *tosgair*; but not knowing that interesting and venerable language, I am, consequently, not in a position to draw from that word any conclusion touching this aspect of my theme. I understand, however, that the Gaelic word is a very old one, whose root reposes in the Irish *toisg*, which means, according to the late Dr MacBain, whose excellent

¹ "The Lord Chancellor was the first subject in the kingdom, both in dignity and in power. From the earliest ages of the monarchy to the death of Cardinal Beaton, fifty-four persons had held that high office; and of these forty-three had been ecclesiastics. The Lords of Session were supreme judges in all matters of civil right; and, by its original constitution, the president and one half of the senators in his court were churchmen."—*History of Scotland*, by Dr Robertson.

² That is to say, from 1295 to 1560, the year in which the Treaty of Edinburgh was signed. I fear I must dismiss as pleasant fiction the Duc de Rohan's opinion that "the two nations, the French and the Scottish, had stood by each other since the Treaty made between Scotland and Charlemagne—a period of eight hundred and seventy-two years—during which time it had ever held firm, never had been isolated, and never been altered."

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etymological dictionary I have consulted, "a journey, business." It may well be, therefore, that our country's first efforts in diplomacy were made at that remote time when, for all practical purposes, Scotland and Ireland were one country. But if this was indeed the case, I fear that no historical record of our early diplomatic essays, which is accessible to those who know no Gaelic, has come down to us. Under these circumstances, therefore, I submit that I am justified in regarding the French Alliance as providing the occasion and the means which first brought Scotland into touch with the great world of European politics and diplomacy.

As the history of the French Alliance, and that of the various important political movements which took their rise from it, and owed their continuance to it, comprise the greatest part of the story of our country's connection with diplomacy, I shall doubtless be excused if I make some brief reference to that Alliance and its cognate political growths. On the other hand, I think it proper to remark that it is not my intention to discuss at any great length, in the course of these observations, the political causes and consequences of our connection with France—an alliance which had so considerable and enduring effects, not only as they regarded the domestic politics and social life of this kingdom, but also, throughout many years of the first importance, with respect to the international political situation of European Christendom. I may remark, in passing, that the social, as the political value to Scotland of the French connection has been differently estimated by our historians. Mr W. L. Matheson in his *Politics and Religion* remarks, "The Scottish people profited in

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many ways through intercourse with the superior civilisation of France; but whether the State, as such, was a gainer by its alliance with that country is extremely doubtful." This, on the whole, would appear to be the modern view; but, for my part, it seems to me that Mr Matheson's verdict is open to the objection that it is couched in too dubious terms, or, at all events, in language which is not generous enough. The social effects of the Alliance were very considerable, and beneficial rather than the reverse; whilst the political fruits are best studied and appreciated in the light afforded by our successful struggle for national independence. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the Alliance supplied the means which enabled our country to play a part in European politics which was altogether disproportionate to her size, and, at certain epochs of her career, to her poverty. It is possible that national vanity may sometimes be unduly excited by a prospect so flattering; but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that our appearance on so public and so splendid a stage was well calculated to produce an educative effect of no little value to the nation.

The first alliance ever effected between Scotland and France was made in the year 1295. Philip the Fair was then at war with England, and easily persuaded John de Baliol, the puppet king of Edward I., to throw off his purchased allegiance to that monarch. Baliol was suppressed; and when in 1303 Philip made peace with England, Scotland was not included in the treaty, being left to shift for herself.

In 1326, two years before the signing of the important treaty of Northampton, the Alliance was revived, and,

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latterly, it was undoubtedly of great service to Scotland in her efforts to preserve her independence against the attacks of Edward III. The battle of Beaugé, and other French successes in the field, were largely gained by Scots assistance ; and, without here going into further detail as to the story of the Alliance as a political event of the first importance in Scots history, it may be remarked in conclusion of this head that if the agreement of 1514 was very unpopular in our country, it was as much repugnant to contemporary Scottish opinion on account of the statesman who made it (Albany), as it was objectionable to the country on the ground of the terms which it contained. We need not trouble to follow the history of this Alliance in its later stages. During Queen Mary's reign the patriotic party violently disputed with the pro-English party the question of the preservation, or dissolution, of the ancient connection. At last, however, the faction of James VI. gained the day ; and though I believe I am correct in stating that it was at one time proposed to that monarch that the Alliance should be revived, yet re-established it was not. Instead, that king ascended the English throne ; and with that event was terminated Scotland's official connection with diplomacy.

It is not necessary, in order to the explication of my present theme, that I should burden the mind of the reader with a mass of historical detail ; but some reference to the political foundations of the stage on which our diplomats trod, as to the persons and qualifications of the principal actors themselves, should not be considered as inopportune at this conjuncture.

After the fall of the Hohenstaufen, in consequence of

the battle of Tagliacozzo, German power and influence in Europe sank to a very low ebb. Italy was in the grip of faction; and the different Christian kingdoms of Spain were convulsed and distracted by the severity of their struggle against the forces of Islam. The only two powers in Europe which were then in a condition to dispute an envied ascendancy were France and England.

The ostensible motive of the Hundred Years' War between France and England was a disputed principle of royal succession; but the real, though secret cause, which precipitated that bloody and protracted struggle, was the growing rivalry between the French and the English. The seeds of that jealousy had been sown many years before; but when Charles IV. died in 1328, bequeathing a disputed succession to his people, the mutual antagonism between England and France, which had long been smouldering, at once broke out into violent flame. Edward III., the male heir to the French throne in nearest direct descent from Philip IV., had been excluded by a straining of the ancient Salic law affected by the Franks. His claim to the French throne was undoubtedly well founded; but in addition to his own grievance, which powerfully urged him to enforce his claim, he could not but be sensible that, in attacking the French, he was also consulting the passions and the prejudices of the majority of his subjects. The French, on the other hand, were no less stirred up to enmity, and eager for war. It was not their wish that a foreigner should succeed to their throne; but the dynastic reason was not the only one inciting them to arm. The French also were inspired,

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in equal degree, with a hostile spirit, which took its rise from the feeling of jealousy glanced at above.

We have already seen that the first Alliance ever concluded between Scotland and France was brought to pass in the year 1295. It should here be observed, however, that the motive which dictated the formation of that Alliance was somewhat different from that which gave rise to those that followed it. In the time of Philip the Fair, the rivalry between England and France had not yet reached that acute stage to which it was come when Philip VI. ascended the throne of the French. It was to annoy England, not to assist her to preserve her own independence, that France engaged Baliol to enter into alliance with her. When, however, the Hundred Years' War began, the international situation, so far as it affected the French party to the compact, had undergone a striking and a pregnant change. France was now threatened with a foreign king. She was about to be required to fight for her existence as an independent country. Patriotism, and hatred of the English (the offspring of jealousy), alike obliged her to cast about for a friend in the extremity of her need. In the Scots she found that friend; but, so far as France was concerned, the old covenant and alliance were renewed in a temper and spirit very different to those that prompted the signing of the original agreement of the year 1295.

The value of the Alliance to the Scots is easily discovered, and should be no less easily understood. Scotland could not well hope to preserve her independence, without the assistance of some country which was strong enough to balance the power of Eng-

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land, by which latter kingdom she was constantly threatened and frequently assailed. France was the only state in Europe which was powerful enough to discharge the office of protector, in the interests of Scotland. Hence, so far as Scotland was concerned, the French Alliance.

The position and attitude of England, as they regard this international understanding, may next be briefly summarised. Obviously that country's interest lay in the direction of the existence of a "little" Scotland. From the English point of view, this was necessary for two reasons. A Scotland not in alliance with any European power might be negligible, if not actually contemptible; but a Scotland so united clearly constituted a danger which she could neither brook nor disregard. So long as Scotland remained an independent kingdom, England could not be certain that she would not be attacked by that country; and that, peradventure, at a time when she was least in a condition successfully to withstand her assaults. The Romans found themselves confronted with a very similar problem, owing to the menace of the Carthagian power. History tells us how that knot was eventually cut. In the saying *Delenda est Carthago*, we seem to hear an echo of the fate which early English statesmen desired, and decreed, for Scotland as an independent country.

But there was yet another motive which instigated English opposition to the French Alliance. The first beginnings of English Imperialism are to be discovered, not in the victories of Drake and Raleigh, as is commonly believed, but in the anti-Scottish measures of Henry I. and his ministers. Thus early did England

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desire to "expand," and thus early did she recognise that an independent Scotland, especially a Scotland in alliance with a Continental Power, offered a fatal obstacle to her ambition, and constituted a thorn in the side of her most cherished plan. Bannockburn saved Scotland from immediate conquest or absorption; but the English designs against Scotland were never forgotten or relinquished. They were periodically revived—drawn from the pigeon-hole in which they reposed, that is to say, whenever, owing to the troubles and distractions of this unhappy kingdom, a fair prospect for their prosecution seemed to open. They constitute an integral part of the English opposition to the Franco-Scottish Alliance; and it is significant, to say the least of it, that the expiration of the final agreement with France roughly synchronised with the accession of James VI. to the English throne, and the consequent diplomatic severance of Scotland from the world of European politics.

A new turn, and one which enormously increased the importancē of Scotland in the eyes of Europe, was given to our alliance with France when Francis I. and the Emperor Charles V. prepared to dispute for the prize of the headship of Europe. The Scottish engagements bound our country to the cause of Francis I.; but our obligations in that respect by no means prevented the Emperor from paying his court to James V., with a view to detaching that monarch from the French interest. At the instigation of the Emperor, James was elected a Knight of the Golden Fleece; whilst another inducement was held out to him in the shape of a match in the Imperial family.

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James, however, resisted these and all other flattering evidences of Charles's interested partiality ; and, by remaining stubbornly firm and constant to the French Alliance, showed that he understood his interest, and that of the nation which he governed, as much as he appreciated the selfish motives of those who sought to persuade him to cancel his engagements with the French. The part assigned to Scotland at this critical conjuncture of international affairs varied in accordance with the successive moves of the figures on the chess-board of European diplomacy. At first, the efforts of the Scottish Government were turned in the direction of diverting Henry of England from carrying his arms into the Continent ; and it was in pursuance of that policy that James IV. led an army to Flodden, where he perished along with numbers of his nobility. But when Henry and Francis patched up their quarrel, and united against the Emperor, the latter neglected no available means of ingratiating himself with the Scots, with a view to engaging them in war with England. James V., however, as we have already seen, remained firm. He would not desert the alliance with France. A long tranquillity rewarded his loyalty, and proved the wisdom of the measures which he had pursued. And the Scottish nation, enjoying as well the unaccustomed blessings of peace as full knowledge of the fact that, so nicely was the balance between the contending parties adjusted, it was in the power of Scotland to make it lean to either side, saw with pride and satisfaction their king and their country elevated on the buckler of political power, and courted and flattered by some of the most considerable nations in Europe.

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Having thus rapidly reconstructed the splendid, if highly insecure and dangerous stage which the Scottish diplomats were invited to tread, it should not be improper to adventure, at this conjuncture, some few general observations as to the course and conduct of those diplomatic negotiations which, in their sum, comprise the story of the Franco-Scottish Alliance. It is proper to observe here, however, that though the Alliance in question was undoubtedly the principal means of introducing our lay and ecclesiastical statesmen to the diplomatic world, yet that great undertaking was not the only channel through which that introduction was effected. The national correspondence with Rome was hardly anything, if at all, less important; and demanded just as much statesmanship and diplomatic address in those who were chosen to undertake it, as the conduct of the alliance with France required merit in such as were burdened with that responsibility. As, however, the latter undertaking attracted the flower of our statesmen; allowed greater scope for their talents; appealed more to the popular imagination; and was undoubtedly of the first importance as a means to preserve the independence of the country,¹ it is with the Franco-Scottish Alliance, and not with the scarcely less interesting story of our diplomatic relations with Rome, that I propose briefly to deal in the course of the following remarks. I am not aware that either of these important topics, so full of history and lively interest to all of us, has ever been brought to a single view or

¹ On several occasions the Scottish Parliament affirmed its belief that the alliance with France was essential to the preservation of the kingdom's independence.

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head by any of our historians. Such references to these important transactions as there are in our histories will be found scattered through their pages, which must be laboriously searched, if we would piece together the paragraphs so as to obtain something like a connected and continuous narrative. The same remark applies to the story of our diplomatic transactions in fields which are foreign to those which I have mentioned above. Our relations with the Courts of Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Flanders, and other continental countries were considerable and close; stretched over a large period of time; employed many eminent persons; and were productive of important and far-reaching results. It seems to me, therefore, that a full, true, and particular account, as well of Scottish achievement in the world of diplomacy, as of her influence on the affairs of Europe, should constitute a study well worth undertaking.

I do not find any mention of the first French Alliance in the Latin list (Palgrave's *Records*) of King John's delinquencies; nor am I wrong, I think, in saying that the name of the person to whom the task of negotiating that treaty was entrusted is not known to us. Possibly, Bishop Fraser, who was eminent in the councils of the king, was our ambassador on that occasion. In 1326, the agreement with France was renewed at Corbeil, Randolph, the friend of Bruce, and subsequently Regent of Scotland, then being our representative. The occasion was worthy of the man, and the man shed lustre on the transaction. In 1359, however, France, without obtaining the consent, or consulting the interests of her ally, concluded a treaty of

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peace with England in which Scotland was not included—conduct on the part of the first-mentioned country, which compares very unfavourably with the loyalty and generosity of the Scots of a subsequent age, who, proffered by Henry VI. a treaty very advantageous to themselves, rejected it, on the ground that to accept it would be to break faith with their ancient allies of France.¹ Despite, however, a certain soreness left in Scotland by conduct so ungrateful and perfidious, the ancient alliance was confirmed and renewed by Robert II., in the year 1371, our ambassadors being Wardlaw, Bishop of Glasgow; Sir Archibald Douglas; and the Dean of Aberdeen. Of Wardlaw, it may be remarked, in passing, that he was sufficiently eminent to be rewarded with the title of "Cardinal of Scotland," a dignity which he owed to the partiality of the anti-Pope, Clement VII.

I cannot, however, hope here to follow each successive embassy to France; to tell the story of each negotiation; and to write a character of the various eminent men who acted in the capacity of diplomatic agents. The alliance with France was confirmed and solemnly renewed as often as the situation of the country necessitated the engaging of foreign assistance for purposes of offence or defence; and, naturally, the best diplomatic talent which Scotland possessed was temporarily associated to these important negotiations.

¹ The former ill conduct of the French towards their Scots allies was, however, strikingly and handsomely redressed by Francis I., who, "by submission, flattery, and address" (Dr Robertson), at last prevailed on Henry to include the Scots in the treaty of peace between France and England.

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The reigns of James IV. and V., and Mary, present a busy and a moving scene in this respect. The embassies were numerous, and attended with every mark and circumstance of pomp and power. The keenest intellects, and the most experienced minds in Scotland were temporarily pressed into the diplomatic service; and no one who is at all familiar with the history of our country at that time but will agree that Scotland was remarkably well served by her agents; that her diplomatic reputation stood, deservedly, very high; and that her power and influence in Europe were great. The zeal of the partisan can always be trusted to find ground for suspicion, and an excuse for the outpouring of the vials of his unmeasured and virulent contempt; but, however much we may be tempted to "take sides," when it comes to be a question of deciding the merit of this or that principle which faction has stirred up, or party has consecrated; to allow mere prejudice to blind our eyes to the attraction of moral worth or outstanding talent were, surely, conduct as unjust as it would be ridiculous. The genius of Cardinal Beaton was not the less great because he served a losing cause, or stained his private life with the gross immoralities of the age. Moray was an able negotiator; yet his character and principles were, and are, detestable to many. The extraordinary gifts of Morton should be candidly acknowledged, in spite of the venality, cunning, and hypocrisy which characterised much of his private and public conduct. One of the first negotiators and most skilful diplomats of his time was Maitland of Lethington, whose mazy and tortuous career was almost unbelievably crooked. Examples such as these of

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aspiring ambition united to extraordinary talent might easily be multiplied; but it is now time for us to leave the realms of reality, and to tread the airy paths of the imagination with the light foot of the visionary.¹

Gibbon remarks somewhere in his *History*—"In the cool shade of retirement we may easily devise imaginary forms of government, in which the sceptre shall be constantly bestowed on the most worthy by the free and incorrupt suffrage of the whole community. Experience overturns these airy fabrics, and teaches us that in a large society the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wisest, or to the most numerous part of the people." Yet, ideal schemes of government have employed the noblest minds, and attracted the brightest talents, from the age of Aristotle to the present day. An employment equally fascinating, but based upon much more sure and sober grounds, is that of speculating as to the probable conduct (under a given set of circumstances) of a country or people, on the supposition of that not having happened which we know has actually come to pass. Discussing the complex question of national, or rather racial psychology, Mr

¹ But as there is a basis of reality to most of our dreams, so may we discover, in the following vision, a solid foundation of fact. After the defeat of Semno by Probus, the Lygian name disappeared from the history either of Germany or the Empire. But in recent times no European nation has suffered extinction, though some may have resigned or lost their independence. The Poles are a striking instance in point. Their country has been dismembered, and belongs to others; but the national spirit exists as strong as ever it did. The Poles want nothing but a favourable conjuncture in order to recover their country and independence.

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Houston Chamberlain (*Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*) remarks that though he should not be prepared to say how a single individual belonging to any given nation might behave under given circumstances, yet he would have no hesitation in ascribing a line of national conduct to a *whole* nation, under similar given circumstances. Prophecy is apt to be confused and discredited by the event; and the castles of pure speculation must always seem airy and unsubstantial refuges in comparison with the grim structures of reality; but I venture to think that, without possessing a knowledge of the history of our country equal to that which the Emperor Tacitus had acquired touching his own and the Empire, it should not be difficult for us to determine the *probable* lines on which our diplomacy had gone, and our fate, as a nation, had been decreed, had that which did happen never taken place; had James not ascended the English throne; and had Scotland remained an independent country.

Now, in order to this end, it is obvious that we should first form some general opinion as to the aggregate genius and the cumulative character of Scottish diplomacy. Moreover, we must be familiar with the throne, and with the character and the temper of the powers which were behind the throne. For, after all, the diplomat is but the servant and representative of his sovereign; and the sovereign is the father and the mouthpiece of the nation which supports him on the throne. Thus, in any speculation, such as that in which we are about briefly to indulge, it is important that the genius of the Scottish people should first be made clear, in order that we may cast, with some degree of prob-

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ability, the approximate lines on which our diplomacy had proceeded, had the union of the crowns of Scotland and England never taken place.

From the date of the ecclesiastical struggles of the Alexanders down to the national agitation which preceded the passing of the Union of 1707, we may easily perceive that it was a principle of national pride which opposed itself to all the various movements, which were popularly believed to be antagonistic to the freedom and the independence of the realm. Scots pride, as Scots poverty, was proverbial. The poverty we may safely ascribe to the destructive wars of Independence, since our country was uncommonly rich and prosperous under the reigns of the Alexanders. But Scots pride was, and, in a measure, still is, inherent in the race. It was to this sentiment that the appeals of those Scotsmen who resisted the measure of 1707 were principally addressed; and had it not been that our merchants and trading communities of that time were bent on securing a new, free, and convenient market for their goods, the probability is that the Union had not been made. But, even as that affair went, national pride struggled so far successfully with a powerful trading interest as to come within an ace of wrecking the whole measure. The Union passed, literally by the skin of its teeth; but militant national pride, wounded to the quick, continued to threaten its existence for many years after.

Thus, national pride, or love of country, was a strong characteristic of the Scots. That spirit was infused into all, from the highest to the lowest in the land. To cut a fine figure in the eyes of

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Europe: to tread with applause and dignity the splendid stage erected by our diplomats in foreign lands—such was the desire that animated the nation of the Scots, and did much to determine the genius of our diplomacy.

But there was more behind our diplomatic undertakings than love of country; the desire to preserve the liberties and the freedom of Scotland; and that principle of pride which discovered its most flattering scene in the spectacle presented by a small and comparatively poor country like Scotland playing a leading and an honourable part in the international politics of Europe. We have already seen that the commercial ambitions of our country opposed, on a highly momentous occasion, a serious rivalry to national pride. The Scottish zeal for, and love of trade are found, at the time of the passing of the Union, in lively competition with the nation's patriotism; but, previous to the accession of James VI. to the English throne, the patriotic sentiment and the national bias in favour of commerce and commercial undertakings operated in harmony, and encouraged one another. Our numerous embassies to the Scandinavian countries in particular, and to the continent of Europe in general, successively prove the truth of this assertion, inasmuch as they were largely concerned with the increase and the improvement of the pre-existing trading facilities. It is no adverse reflexion on the national character to say, that a keen eye to the main chance, to hold popular language, early characterised the Scots, as much in their private dealings with one another as in the larger and more important sphere of their commercial relations

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with foreign nations.¹ The national bias in this respect could not but reveal itself on every favourable occasion; and diplomacy constituted the means by which the trading interest and instinct were conducted from their common source to their natural outlets—our diplomacy receiving, in its turn, a certain pronounced tinge or colour from the complexion of the negotiations which flowed through its channel.

The two principal historians of early Scotland paint a pleasing picture of the state of our country during the rule of the Alexanders. Under the sceptre of these "kings of Peace," Scotland enjoyed unexampled prosperity. The customs of the town of Berwick, "the Alexandria of the North," were farmed during the reign of Alexander III., for a sum "amounting to more than a quarter of the whole revenue of England derived from similar sources." The fisheries were in a flourishing condition; and voluntary aids were not required—"the most convincing proof," as Mr E. W. Robertson justly observes, "of the prosperity of the kingdom" during the reigns of Alexander II.

¹ The Celtic nations were early distinguished by their zeal for trade. The popular belief that they despised commerce is a *modern* superstition. It is true that amongst the semi-feudalised Gaelic-speaking Scots some traces of the existence of such a spirit were at one time to be observed; but the men who indulged it were degenerates, in the sense that, owing to the unsettled state of the country and the precarious nature of the tenure by which they held their lands, they had departed from "ancient custom" and the genius of the Celtic race. A good deal of scattered information touching the Gauls and other Celts, as traders, will be found in Mr Rice Holmes's *Cæsar's Conquest of Gaul*, Dr Joyce's *Social Ireland*, and the immortal Roman's *De Bello Gallico*.

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and III. But alas! with the premature death of "the Maid of Norway," this,

"oure Gold was changed in-to Lede,"

as the first of the lowland poets, Wynton, expresses it. Not until the reign of James IV.¹ was Scotland to witness a return of the prosperity which she had enjoyed under the encouraging and beneficent rule of the two last Alexanders. War and bloodshed were to usurp where peace had reigned almost supreme; and in the room of order and progress, faction, cabal, and discord were to raise their horrid heads.

The picture of Scotland during the War of Independence, and again during the reigns of David II., Robert III., and others of the kings of the House of Stewart, is not one on which the eye of the patriot can rest with any pleasure, or of which his memory can retain aught save the most painful and disagreeable impressions. With so much lawlessness, rudeness, and ferocity abroad in the land, the civil state of the monarchy during the period we are considering must needs have been what indeed it was, troubled and melancholy in the last degree. The learning and politeness of the kingdom (as the latter subsisted in the days of the Alexanders) must have suffered well-nigh irremediable shipwreck, in consequence of the long and destructive struggle with England, and the hardly less injurious campaigns set

¹ I am aware that the nation enjoyed considerable prosperity under the rule of Robert the Bruce; but that temporary amelioration did not, unfortunately, survive the death of the monarch who so largely contributed to it.

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on foot by the feuds and factions which disgraced the reigns of the successors of Robert the Bruce. For art and letters, politeness and learning (as for the successful prosecution of trade), peace is the favourable season, even if it is not absolutely essential thereto.¹ But, during all these many weary blood-stained years, Scotland knew no peace; or, if peace there was for a brief space, it was not true peace, but armistice, above whose trembling head there was suspended, as though by a single thread, a naked sword.

The decay of politeness and learning, and the depression of the arts and graces of civilisation in general, which took place in Scotland by reason of the causes glanced at above, did not, however, proceed so far as entirely to destroy the finer notions and faculties of our people. The flower, indeed, was cut off, but the roots remained; and probably no nation in Europe received the gospel of the Renaissance more gladly, or took its civilising lessons more nearly to heart, than did our own country.

¹ I am aware that much might be plausibly advanced to discredit the truth of this statement. There abound particular instances in history in which peace, so far from proving favourable to the arts, seemed to stifle and smother them; but I apprehend that the real enemy was luxury, not peace. When the Roman emperors abandoned Rome as the seat of government and the capital of the Empire, art and letters sank to a very low ebb, though Rome enjoyed peace. Trajan's superb trophy was rifled and despoiled in order to complete the Arch of Constantine; but in spite of this, and many other similar exceptions to the rule above laid down, it is but reasonable to regard a state of peace as more favourable to art and learning than one of war can ever be. As to trade, there can be neither progress nor stability therein, save under the auspices of peace.

Thus, we find that the principal characteristics of pre-union Scotland were—national pride, a strong bias in favour of commerce and trading, and humanism. I use this latter word, however, not in the narrow classic sense in which it originally came to us, but as denoting culture in general, in conjunction with a polite, humane, and generous spirit. After their coming, these powerful forces were infused into our diplomacy, and early gave it a turn which, had it endured, must have produced a profound effect not only on the country which stood to benefit most by reason of such improving influences, but on those also with which she was in correspondence on a footing of equality.

To my mind, nothing in history is more melancholy to contemplate than the fate of a promising prince who has been cut off in his prime. The murder of Alexander Severus, or the death of Prince Henry, the virtuous son of an unworthy and contemptible father, are equally calculated to excite in us sentiments of the utmost grief and dismay. But, surely, the spectacle of a nation which has lost, or voluntarily surrendered, its ancient independence is equally moving, if not vastly more distressing. As regards our own country, and the fate which overtook it, I think it is Mr Innes, the historian, who remarks, "there is something melancholy in considering the constitution of an ancient and independent kingdom, when it has been absorbed in a greater. School our minds to it as we will, sum up all the benefits of the Union, and dwell with all truth upon the ancient miseries of war between sister nations, and the

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degrading and demoralising of the later provincial government of our end of the island, no Scotsman can look back without some sadness to the independence of his country, so dearly won, and of which we still idly cherish the memory." These noble words are not more characterised by eloquence than they are marked by moderation, and the impress of a patriotic and philosophical cast of mind. They represent, surely, the lowest quantity to which the patriotic sentiments of any modern Scotsman can be reduced. The sphere of emotion they discover for our feelings is a purely retrospective one. The briefest and most perfunctory attempt to reconstruct our post-Union history, on the basis of national independence, and in the light afforded by some of the more notable historical events which took place subsequent to the accession of James VI. to the English throne, should constitute a kind of prophecy which, though melancholy enough, yet should not be altogether disagreeable to the lover of his country.

No doubt each successive century constitutes a kind of preparation for the dominant ideas of the century that follows it. The seed of the Renaissance was sown by Dante; but it was Petrarch who assisted at the birth of the flower. I think, then, we may take it for granted that the ideas of the religious reformers of the sixteenth century would have prevailed in the seventeenth to this extent at least (had not James ascended the English throne), namely, that the notable cooling off as regards the cordiality of our relations with France, which followed the establishment of the Protestant religion, would have continued to widen the breach between the former allies. France, at that

time, was rapidly drifting towards that bourne of despotism and absolute power to which feudalism, as practised in that country, was bound, sooner or later, to carry her. The ideas of the Protestant party, though equally despotic in their way,¹ yet did not favour the royal prerogative and the establishment of unlimited monarchical power. This difference of sentiment, together with the cleavage of opinion as regards religion, could not but produce the coolness between France and Scotland which is postulated above, and which indeed did take place. On the other hand, it is hardly conceivable that so cautious, pusillanimous, and intriguing a prince as James VI. would have allowed the French Alliance entirely to disappear from his measures. Had he remained at home, instead of going to England, the probability rather would seem to be that he had instructed his ambassadors to amuse the French with plausible professions of friendship, whilst, at the same time, he industriously curried favour, through the same channel, with the English. His religious principles (such as they were), joined to a far more powerful influence, namely, his dread of a fanatical Protestant party, would have turned him from Catholic France;

¹ Though the reign and character of James VI. are equally contemptible, yet he deserves some credit on account of the courage and address which he showed on one occasion, namely, when, in consequence of the affair of Mr Black, he dissipated the absurd and dangerous pretensions of the Protestant clergy. The ecclesiastical settlement of 1597 proved that even James was capable of rising to the occasion, though no manly conduct that he ever showed can extenuate his frequent sinkings to mean and undignified accommodations.

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but fears for the loss of his crown and kingdom by means of the arms of England would have obliged him to preserve some sort of measures with the ancient alliance, and the considerable party at home which supported it. Thus, the probability seems to be, that James would have endeavoured to rule by the simple expedient of balancing the power of one party in his dominions against that of the other; and as history proves him to have had no little natural talent and acquired address for so equivocal an employment, I feel constrained to adventure the opinion that he would have succeeded in his object. And if I am conceded the premises which I have laid down above, I apprehend that I am at liberty to conclude from thence that Scotland had continued to occupy, during the seventeenth, and during the greatest part of the eighteenth centuries (which is as far as this particular view is carrying us), that commanding position in the affairs of Europe which her situation and diplomacy had secured for her from the time of James IV., if not considerably earlier in her history.

No one can be more conscious than is the author of these present remarks that, in order to tread with success, and with some degree of plausibility, the thorny and uncertain path which he has here marked out for himself, uncommon gifts and exceptional qualities are demanded of him. To the agility of Agar, he should unite a gift of tongues equal to that possessed by Irenæus; the historical learning of Gibbon or Mommsen; the dexterity of Cavour; and the address, intuition, and penetration of Comte d'Aranda. He would be a prodigy of genius who should unite, in his

own person, talents at once so varied and so extraordinary. The present author can adventure no such boastful claim. He is but too conscious, alike of his own shortcomings, in view of so difficult and slippery an undertaking as that to which he is here committed, as of the many snares and delusions which infest the uncertain road on which he travels, much as thieves and cut-throats, in some unsettled land, lie close in wait to strip the incautious traveller of his gear and goods.

I beg leave, therefore, to leave to pens more capable than mine, and to minds more gifted than that of the writer can claim to be, the arduous task of filling in the fanciful picture of the state of an independent Scotland as we are to suppose the latter to have existed from the beginning of the seventeenth to the close of the eighteenth century; and pass thankfully on to a brief consideration of the French Revolution.

Would the Scottish monarchy, assuming that it had managed to exist so long, have survived the shock of the French Revolution? That is a hypothetical problem of the greatest interest, and one, I submit, in regard to which there exist more or less sure guides in order to assist us to arrive at a plausible solution. For my own part, I do not think that the monarchy would have survived the revolutionary ideas which, released by the capture of the Bastille, swept like an immense flood through almost all the countries and kingdoms of Europe. Those, I imagine, who are at all conversant with the state of public opinion in this country at that time, and who have been at pains to consult the dusty files of contemporary periodical literature, will agree with me in

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saying that republican and revolutionary sentiment ran very high in Scotland, in consequence of the French upheaval.¹ The probability is, then, I venture to think, that the king of the day had not been able to stem that tide; and that the white flower of liberty had been dipped, as in France, in the encrimsoned flood of popular licence. The Stewarts were "pretty," rather than strong men; and as of the latter they gave us but two or three examples, I make bold to claim the law of averages, as the balance of probability, as being in favour of my supposition.

What particular religious and social effects the institution of a republic in our country, in room of the monarchy, would have produced in contemporary Scotland, it is, of course, impossible to say. But one event at least I think we are justified in regarding as a probable consequence of so important and momentous an imaginary change. An affinity of sentiments, based on a principle of self-preservation, acting in conjunction with the consciousness of identity of political form, would probably have induced the Scots greatly to strengthen, or to revive, if it had been laid aside (which I regard as improbable), the ancient alliance with France. The war against that country seems to have been dictated more by English class hatred of republican institutions and principles, united to a lively fear of their spreading to England, and there destroying the existing Constitu-

¹ In Scotland, as in France, the prevailing sentiment was then one which consisted of a blend of revolutionary and atheistical opinion. With regard to the latter Sir James Mackintosh refers in his *Life* to "the unphilosophical and indeed fanatical animosity to Christianity which was so prevalent during the latter part of the eighteenth century."

tion in Church and State, than on account of any other discoverable reason which, when weighed in the balance of national interest, will be found to be sufficient to excuse or to justify that disingenuous undertaking; but whether or not that war would have been waged, if Scotland had been in alliance with France at the time, is a question which opens a wide field of speculation, into which the writer must firmly but respectfully decline to be enticed. If that war had not been waged, would the sublime star of Napoleon have decorated the firmament of human genius and ambition? Would Nelson have sailed the seas for the destruction and humiliation of the French marine? But these, and many other cognate themes of engaging, if vain speculation, I abandon without regret to those who are learned in the leaves of the Sibylline books.

But now let us leave those who, by the arts of diplomacy or the fury of patriotism were prevailed on to draw the sword, to live, or to perish, by the same; and bring our vision to a close with a few words touching a portion of the picture where arms and armed men, and the smoke of battle, are not, and

"every prospect pleases."

We shall not, I think, be paying ourselves a compliment to which we have no right to aspire, or be improperly straining the bent of our national genius, merely in order to gratify (though it were but in a crystal) an appetite for posture and a passion for parade, if we venture the opinion that modern Scots diplomacy (supposing that such a thing existed) would be on the side of the big ideas now current in Europe, rather

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than on that of the big battalions. I think that Scottish diplomacy would exercise a steadying effect on modern international relations; and that our voice would be raised in the council of the nations much more often in behalf of peace and all its innumerable blessings, graces, and benefits, than it would be lifted up in order to excite war, or to excuse and palliate the ills and mischiefs that follow in its train. I think, too, that Scots diplomacy, whilst, as of old, not unmindful of the material interests of our nation, would by now have done something more than has yet been accomplished to prepare the way for the removal of the ever-growing scandal of a Europe, groaning under its weight of arms, and idly prattling, simultaneously, of peace. I think that our national temper and genius, no less than our interests, would conspire to cause us to take a prominent part in all movements and undertakings which should have as their object the amelioration, if not the dissipation, of international suspicions and enmities, and the diffusion of humanitarian ideas as a means to promote the welfare, and to raise and ennoble the sentiments, of the human race. It is honourably related of Scotland by one of our ancient historians (Fordun), that, during the glorious and ever memorable reign of Alexander III., many came "from the West and from the East to consider its power, and to study its polity." Surely, what was then capable to be done, in behalf of our own country and others, we of this generation are to be permitted to believe that we should be able to emulate, if not to surpass, supposing that the means proper to the end were once more associated to our political situation? In fine, I think that a Scotland occupying the honour-

able and useful position which she formerly enjoyed would be an incalculable power for good in modern Europe. I believe that Scotland, under the conditions postulated by these marks, would constitute an educative and an ennobling influence of the first importance. A prospect so splendid, so full of dignity, so flattering to just national pride, and so agreeable to history cannot but be attractive to all that is best and most progressive in the common thought of our country.

When Rome was in her decline, and rival emperors fought for the supremacy of the Latin world, it became customary for the vanquished candidate for the imperial honours to remind the victor, when the former fell into the latter's hands, of the uncertainty of life, and the fickleness of fortune. Such seasonable and philosophical representations were rarely, if ever, successful in saving the life of the defeated aspirant who uttered them ; but in the melancholy fate which subsequently overtook the whole Roman Empire we may observe, at our leisure, as well a mighty example of the fickleness of fortune as of the uncertainty which characterises the things of this transitory world. An empire which to-day is, may be, on the morrow, as it were, cut down and cast into the burning. From the ground of the seeming stability of to-day, it is an easy thing boastfully to prognosticate things equally sure, and just as stable, for to-morrow. But rosy optimism of this kind is not sanctioned by the lessons History. Empires rise, and empires fall : kingdoms come, and kingdoms go. In a world which is based on change, nothing can long remain stationary ; and that nation or people which allows itself to be amused with dreams of another country's everlasting dominion, or


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suffers its own patriotism to rust, is not to be regarded as superior, in a point of wisdom, to the five foolish virgins of Holy Scripture, who slumbered and slept, and allowed their lamps to go out, pending the coming of the bridegroom.

VIATOR.



Is Nationalisation of Life Assurance Desirable?

HAT blessed word—"Nationalisation"! Its polysyllabic sonority has for some people a weird Mesopotamia-like attraction. But the best and biggest of words have their limitations. You cannot nationalise everything. And before you propose to make anything national, you must be sure that the operation is rational.

This, and another, thought occurred to me after perusal of a note in a weekly journal of a book entitled *Insurance and the State*, written by Dr W. F. Gephart, Professor of Economics at Washington University. The reviewer's remarks conveyed the impression to me that the Professor was an ardent advocate of the principle of nationalisation as applied to life and other descriptions of insurance. The second thought was a sympathetic recollection of Prince Bismarck's too sweeping dictum, appreciatively quoted by Lord Beaconsfield in an excerpt from a private conversation—"Heaven save us from the Professors!"

But a perusal of the book shows me that I did Dr Gephart an unintentional injustice. His attitude in regard to this question is correct, non-committal, and

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temperate. He brings a judicial mind to bear upon the problem ; he balances the arguments for and against nationalisation with precision and nicety ; and if he seems in the end to be still "sitting on the fence," it needs no prophet to indicate the side on which he will eventually alight. If he had had practical experience of insurance in this country one might bet one of his own nation's "bottom dollars" that his footfall would avoid the nationalisation thicket.

Dr Gephart discusses the problem as it might be applied to the business of insurance in America, where conditions are vastly different to those prevailing in this country ; and his investigation extends to its bearings on fire, accident, and other descriptions, as well as on life underwriting. The limits of this article preclude reference to the American situation, or nationalisation in this country of anything but life assurance. But, parenthetically, I may say that he seems to have made out a case for the desirability of more strict supervision in regard to certain matters affecting insurance in the States—such as building construction in its relation to the conflagration hazard.

His reflections as regards any proposals for nationalisation of life assurance in America cause him to consider whether social conditions would be improved there under a State system, through the satisfaction of an extended demand for protection of this kind arising from enhanced benefits. It is true, as he indicates, that only a comparatively small number of people assure their lives without solicitation and on their own initiative, and it is also true that life assurance is of enormous advantage to the national and social well-

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being of a people. If inducements for a larger volume of life assurance could be held out to the public under a State system, there would clearly be at least one good reason for nationalisation. Two methods are mentioned by him, which he suggests include all others, as likely to increase the public demand for life policies, viz., (a) a reduction in the cost of the benefits to be secured; and (b) the education of the people to a better understanding and appreciation of these advantages. The result of his investigations as to whether these methods could be attained in America is not encouraging to supporters of the new doctrine. Let me try to see if greater success in such a direction is likely to be gained in this country.

Life assurance business has been successfully carried on in the United Kingdom through the medium of mutual or joint-stock companies for the best part of two centuries, and although State supervision does not exist here, no government standard basis of valuation being imposed on these institutions, and there being no interference by government authorities with their administration or finance, contrary to the custom in this respect of many other countries, it is indisputable that, as a whole, better results have been obtained, and the stronger reserves are now held by British life assurance offices as a whole than can be claimed for the life offices of any other part of the world. Since the Life Assurance Companies Act of 1870 came into being, requiring the deposit of £20,000 (which bears an infinitesimal proportion to the assets of a well-established life office) with the High Courts, and the filing of certain annual and quinquennial accounts and statements with the Board of Trade, there has been no

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failure on the part of any British life office to discharge its liabilities in full; and stimulated by the necessity for this publicity, and notwithstanding the fact that the destinies of life offices are absolutely left to themselves, the companies have vied with one another in raising the standards of their valuations to a degree of stringency unknown in countries where a minimum valuation standard is imposed. The amount of profit distributed to policyholders has differed widely amongst these institutions, but in total volume has been proportionately very great, and in very many cases policies have been more than doubled in value through the application of bonus.

The latest annual returns of life offices to the Board of Trade, published by the authority of the House of Commons in February last, excluding those of offices whose head offices are situated in other countries, shows that, at the date of their statements, these companies in the ordinary section of life assurance were in possession in round figures of a premium income of £30,500,000, and of accumulated funds of £370,500,000; and that in the industrial life section the premium income amounted to £16,700,000, and the accumulated funds to £52,200,000.

The fact that life assurance business has been cultivated north of the Tweed with great success, will specially interest many readers of this periodical. Excluding companies carrying on industrial business I find, through a careful analysis of the figures, that of the ordinary life funds of British offices more than one-third is owned by Scottish life offices, the great majority of these being established in Edinburgh. The transfer of

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the business and funds of these institutions to the control of the Government would therefore disturb to a large extent a typical Scottish national industry, and could only be justified, if it were capable of proof that better results could be obtainable by the community, under an alteration from a competitive to a national system.

The majority of our life offices are nominally proprietary in constitution. The minority which are conducted on a mutual basis distribute the whole of the profits realised from their operations, as actuarially ascertained, amongst their own members. But, as a matter of fact and practice, mutuality dominates the conduct of all British life assuring institutions. Where these are shareholders, in return for the protection afforded by subscribed capital, a small proportion of the divisible profits accrue to them; but the force of competition is tending to reduce this proportion to almost negligible dimensions, and the actual bonus results to policyholders in the best proprietary companies compare fairly with those which are produced in the most successful mutual life offices. As against the burden of a fractional share of profits, countervailing advantages are frequently enjoyed by policyholders in joint-stock life assurance companies, from the acquisition of connections favourably influencing the economic development of the business.

Let me consider Professor Gephart's first point in relation to this country. Would the transfer of life assurance business to the British Government reduce the cost of the benefits to the assured? Other items beyond mere expenditure enter into this question, for

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the cost of benefits is to a large extent dependent (*a*) on careful selection, so far as it can be exercised, of assurable lives having fair prospects of longevity, and (*b*) on the profitable investment of the funds.

So far as actual expenses are concerned, the average expense ratio in ordinary life offices or departments in this country, according to the latest Board of Trade returns, was about 13 per cent. of the premiums, of which roughly 5 per cent. represented commission and 8 per cent. the cost of administration. A certain proportion of the expenses are necessitated by special outlays for the acquisition of new business, and if these could be excluded, I do not think I would be far out in estimating that on renewable business the cost would be reduced to 9 per cent. of the premiums, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. representing commission and $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. other expenses. Under a national system the cost of commission on existing business could not be reduced without injustice to individuals and infringement of contracts, and it is hardly likely that management by government officials would lighten administrative charges but rather the reverse. But in any case as these costs, exclusive of commission, amount to no more than 1s. 3d. in the pound of premiums, it is evident that the possibility of any saving in this respect in this country is hardly worth consideration.

Life offices depend largely on their profits on a favourable incidence of mortality, and on the successful investment of their funds at a good rate of interest. These features enter into the question of the costs of benefit, and must therefore be considered in the bearing on this part of the problem.

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A favourable mortality is usually the result of care in the selection of lives, after medical tests and careful enquiries regarding the personal and family history of the proposer. It is also influenced by the continuous accession of new approved entrants, whose eligibility is tested before they are admitted as policyholders, for the inclusion of a considerable body of new and healthy members maintains the average corporate degree of longevity amongst the assured, the majority of whom have been admitted under conditions regarding health which are no longer applied to them. Self-interest on the part of directors, who must either be policyholders or shareholders, stimulates a vigilance in selection which could scarcely be expected from a body of government officials, and in this respect it seems impossible to come to any other conclusion than that the interests of existing policyholders would suffer were the right of approval of the proposals of new entrants transferred to a disinterested body.

But the greatest source of profit to a life office is derived from the investment of its funds in sound securities yielding a productive rate of interest. Most life offices assume in their valuations that they will not earn more than 3 per cent. per annum upon their accumulations. A considerable number of them assume that they will not earn more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Anything earned from interest more than the rate assumed is profit, an immensely preponderant share of which is transformed into bonuses to policyholders. The last published returns to the Board of Trade show that on the average, British life offices earned a clear 4 per cent. after deduction of income tax, as interest on their invest-

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ments during 1912. If an office earns 4 per cent. there is a profit of 30s. per cent. from the investment of the funds should its valuation be on a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. basis; or a profit of 20s. should it be on a 3 per cent. basis. Expenses of management, inclusive of commission, in all British life offices amounted in 1912 to £3,961,774, which represents less than 22s. per cent. on the funds. The profit from interest, in excess of the actuarial assumption, must have exceeded that sum in 1912, so that from the investment of the funds the whole expenses of the year were more than provided for. Would this have been possible if the investment of the funds had been placed under the control of a government department? I think not. Indeed I am sure not.

Directors and actuaries of life offices can take long views as to investments. If the business of life assurance progresses as it has on the independent lines on which it has hitherto been conducted, there is always more money coming in than is going out, and consequently funds may be placed in securities that do not require to be realisable at any given time; and such securities, whilst unsuitable to the ordinary investor, yield a higher rate of interest than is obtainable from securities for the acquisition of which all the world competes with him. But if the business were non-progressive; if, as might very well happen under a government system, the volume of new business were insufficient to make good the amount which is passing off the books through natural causes; then the whole system of investment by life offices would have to be altered in favour of readily realisable and short-dated securities, with inevitable impairment of the interest yielded. More

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than half the amount of the funds of British life offices are at present invested in mortgages, loans, land and house property, ground rents, and life interests and reversions, in regard to which the personal knowledge and skill of expert business advisers is supremely important. All those who are engaged in selecting securities for British life offices are, moreover, personally and keenly interested in the profitable investment of the funds, which would not be the case, at least to so large an extent, with a government department. Furthermore, the placing of hundreds of millions of funds in the hands of the State for investment purposes would be a real danger to the interests of the persons involved. It can hardly be disputed that under certain circumstances the temptation to use these funds for other purposes than for the sole benefit of policyholders would become irresistible. We have recently had a suggestion on the highest authority as to investments of the funds of approved societies under the National Health Act, which, to say the least, is somewhat disconcerting. I therefore unhesitatingly state my opinion, with reference to Professor Gephart's first point, that the transfer of life assurance business in this country to the Government would not increase benefits to the assured; but that on the other hand it would be calculated to seriously diminish them, and to such an extent that even the face values of policies, apart from prospects of bonus, would be in imminent peril, unless backed by a government guarantee, which might prove an intolerable burden to the British taxpayer.

Let us next consider Professor Gephart's second enquiry, as applicable to conditions in this country,

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whether under a State system of life assurance the public would be educated to a better understanding and appreciation of life assurance benefits.

All experience shows that as far as new life assurance business is concerned the influence of the middleman is all-important. Advertising and publicity of any kind elicits only a feeble response. There are four life offices in this country—and there are never likely to be more, the youngest of them having been established seventy-nine years ago—which do not employ agents, or pay commission for the introduction of business. They rely for development on their own merits and on the recommendations, not directly rewarded, of their own members. They have been admirably managed. Owing to the absence of any expenses by way of commission they are very economically conducted. They have done excellently for their members. Their standard of divisible profits has been very high. On pure merits they are very attractive to seekers after life assurance benefits; and they certainly deserve a large share of the new life assurances effected in this country. But what do we find? The new life business effected by British offices within the United Kingdom in 1912 amounted to £52,500,000. The new policies effected with non-commission paying offices covered only £1,183,476, or little more than one-fiftieth of the total amount. But for the interested efforts of the agent or middleman, the amount of new life assurance business in this country would be infinitesimal compared with the actual result. Abolish agents, and it would be left to some actuarial Gibbon to chronicle the decline and fall of British life assurance.

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It is clear, then, that for educative purposes the employment of agents would be indispensable under any government system, and there is no ground for believing that their services could be secured at a lower rate of remuneration than they now earn. A life assurance agency is not a particularly lucrative means of livelihood. Professor Gephart puts this point of view admirably as follows: "Young men are free to choose the business of soliciting insurance equally among many other employments. Yet there is a dearth of insurance agents. If it be replied that there are few who are qualified for the work, that is, that a national monopoly of supply exists, then it must be admitted that those employed earn their wages. Nor is there any reason to suppose that under State insurance the present agents would voluntarily work for a less wage." Payment by results is the only sound basis for remuneration to agents. Salaried officials, in substitution of agents paid by commission would assuredly be an experiment leading to disillusion and disappointment. What other educative influences could be brought to bear so that masses of people could be induced to assure their lives? The actual working of a State scheme of life assurance would be little likely to furnish arguments for a greater popularity. In its essence, ordinary life assurance must be voluntary, and to suppose that masses of people will assume its responsibilities at the instigation of journalists and lecturers and bill-posters, implies a contradiction to the teachings of all experience, and a preposterous demand upon credibility.

But why, it may be asked, do we labour this question? Surely in this age of enlightenment nobody

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would propose the nationalisation of life assurance in the United Kingdom with any hope of the suggestion attaining parliamentary approval. Indeed I have sufficient confidence in the common sense of my fellow countrymen to believe that this is unlikely. But the twentieth century is a century of surprises, in which the unexpected must frequently happen, and in the whirligig of politics who can tell what may be in store for us, should such proposals really be made to some scratch and uncontrolled parliament of faddists and theorists, eager as Athenians to try something new, and unenlightened or careless as to the accompanying risk to the national well-being. Italy with its monstrous Insurance Act of 1912 sounds an alarm. Through this extraordinary statute, life assurance in that country has become a State monopoly. Existing life assurance companies have to clear out from the kingdom within ten years, and can only continue to transact business on the condition that two-fifths of the amount assured by new policies must be reinsured with the Italian National Insurance Institute, and that 50 per cent. of the premiums retained by the assuring company be invested, together with their accumulations, in Italian State funds. Whoever otherwise attempts to grant assurances to Italian subjects is liable to a fine of from 10 to 20 per cent. of the sum assured; in case of a second offence the fine is 20 per cent., and in case of a third it is 40 per cent. No company or underwriter is ever likely to risk a fine of £100, £200, or £400 for the pleasure of insuring a policy for £1000, carrying a premium of from £20 to £50. The people of Italy are therefore to have no other life assurance resource, except the national

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monopoly. Their policies are to be guaranteed by the State, but the whole of the net profits ascertained by valuation, arising from the accumulation of their premiums, is to be applied towards "the fund providing against workmen's old age pensions and incapacity." At least half the insurance reserves in the hands of the Italian Insurance Institute must be invested in Italian National Debt securities, or in other securities issued or guaranteed by the State, and not more than one-tenth may be invested in real estate. Other sums may be invested in loans on Italian Government securities, in purchase of annuities payable by the State, in loans on policies within surrender values, or may be disbursed "in subventions to State employees, provincial and municipal, and to public charitable institutions."

The primary object of this precious measure for National Insurance, which came into force on 1st January 1913, was declared by its introducer to be "not to obtain revenue for the State, but to render life assurance popular with the classes, and to make it accessible to all." Is it likely to succeed in its purpose? Was there ever a finer illustration of "how not to do it"? Other nations please note and take warning from this appalling example. Unfortunate Italy! That way national madness lies.

A. G. MACKENZIE.

The Awakening of the Farm Servant



HE awakening of the farm workers is one of the most significant features of modern industrial movements in Scotland. Time was—and not so very long ago—when the Scotch agricultural labourers lived in a world by themselves, and had neither lot nor part in the progressive life of the nation. Even in the days when the late Mr Joseph Arch was in the hey-day of his fame, the wave of trade unionism, which spread like a vivifying force over the agricultural districts of Kent and Warwickshire, never penetrated to the secluded bothies and farm-houses of Scotland. The comparative failure of one pioneer movement in the late eighties only served to emphasise the complete indifference of the farm workers to trade-union ideas. To-day, however, a new spirit is abroad in the rural districts, and from Sutherlandshire in the north, to Wigtown in the south, there is a great and growing movement in favour of juster and more humane social conditions for the Scottish farm workers. Nor is this “awakening” confined to agricultural labourers themselves. The orthodox politicians have also “discovered” the farm workers, and Liberal and Conservative M.P.’s are vying with one another in demonstrating their disinterested zeal for their welfare. Cynical observers may

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declare that legislators and aspiring legislators only began to interest themselves in rural problems when the Scottish farm servant himself showed signs of waking up. It may be that they only started to talk of small holdings when farm servants showed that they had begun to "do a little thinking of their own." It may be that the farmers only commenced to consider the advisability of allowing their workmen a little more leisure when the agitation for a weekly half-holiday assumed formidable proportions, and when the lure of Canada threatened to denude the rural districts of their best blood and sinew. All these things may be true—I say neither Yea nor Nay on the matter—but as an old farm servant I welcome, nevertheless, the general recognition that the time has come when something ought to be done for the farm labourer, when the farm labourer ought to be enabled to do something for himself.

The farm labourer is one of the most distinctive types of Scottish workmen. Generations of hard living and solitary days in the fields—of stress and struggle and self-sacrifice on the part of the mothers of the race—have gone to build up the characteristics of the rural toilers of the North. Just as "in order to reform a man one must begin with his grandfather," so, in order to understand thoroughly the Scottish farm servants, it is necessary to bear in mind the social and economic conditions under which their "forebears" have lived.

The Scottish farm labourer is not, as a rule, an ardent politician—at any rate, in the narrower sense in which that word is used—but in the social questions

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which affect his own personal welfare, he is taking an increasing interest. I do not pretend, of course, that his judgments are always sound. I have no wish to paint idyllic pictures. I know the weaknesses as well as the virtues of the farm labourer too well for that. His sympathies are probably with the Turriff cow and her owner, rather than with those who insisted that he ought to make reasonable provision against the ravages of sickness. Nevertheless, he is at heart a sound democrat, and takes a refreshingly independent outlook on life. Probably it is the extreme isolation of his life that fosters to some extent that self-reliant spirit. Certainly he displays much less inclination to follow in the sheep track than do the rank and file of unskilled workers in the city. He must hammer out for himself the problems, great and small, with which he is confronted. The economic conditions of the past may be responsible for a certain narrowness of outlook, but that has been to a large extent corrected by the excellent system of elementary education which has obtained for many generations in the rural districts of Scotland. Long before the Education Act of 1872 was passed, the little, low-roofed school was a centre of light and learning in every parish in Scotland. Even the humblest of farm workers generally had a smattering of the "three R's," and more than one rugged crofter and his hard-working wife could, in the evening of life, look back with pride on the day on which they first saw their eldest son "wag his pow in a poopit." There have been clergymen who spent their early years—sometimes their college vacations too—following the plough, and among my own personal friends and acquaintances I can recall

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a not inconsiderable number whose sons occupy important positions in the State, or who have carved out for themselves responsible positions in the Dominions beyond the Seas. It is worthy of mention, too, that the leader of the Labour Party in the House of Commons is the son of Scottish farm servants, and in point of intellectual vigour and debating ability, as well as in the higher qualities of statesmanship, he is one of the most potent forces in the political life of to-day. All these, of course, may be isolated cases of strong men triumphing over adverse circumstances, but I draw attention to them merely for the purpose of emphasising the fact that, for many generations past, education in the rural parishes of Scotland has been in a far higher state of efficiency than in the agricultural districts on the other side of the Tweed. That fact in itself—apart altogether from racial or even climatic considerations—is largely responsible for the marked superiority of the Scotch farm worker over the agricultural labourers of England.

There is, in Scotland, little, if anything, of that subservience to squire and parson which characterises the English labourer, making him at times the despair of social reformers. Even the older men who were reared on oatmeal porridge, the Shorter Catechism, and the songs of Burns, are distinctly superior as a type to the bucolic labourers of rural England, whose loftiest ideal of life is summed up in the lines:—

God bless the squire and his relations,
And keep us in our proper stations.

Mr J. S. Fletcher, the novelist, in an article which he contributed a year or two ago to a leading Liberal

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daily said, that in spite of continual instruction as to the secrecy of the ballot, the rural voter in England can never get over a certain fear that his "betters" will find out how he voted. "What's t' good o' tellin' me 'at they weern't find out?" I heard a man say after he had been to vote. "When I got into t' pollin' booth, there were Mr Robi'son t' lawyer; he was what they call t' presidin' officer, and, as ye know, he's a gre't friend of our master's. Thinks I to missen, 'Now, then, he'll hev summat to do wi' openin' t' box, and he can find out how I voted, and then he'll tell t' master, and I shall lose my wark.' And so I voted blue instead of yaller."

I cannot possibly imagine such a conversation as that taking place between two Scottish farm labourers. I have said that the Scottish farm servant is not an enthusiastic politician, but there are, of course, exceptions. I have known a sturdy cattleman refuse with characteristic emphasis the privilege of driving along with his employer to the polling booth, preferring rather to tramp half-a-dozen long Scotch miles on a winter afternoon in order to record his vote. The spirit of the true democrat was there for whatever party his vote may have been cast that afternoon. That spirit of manly independence is, I think, growing among the farm servants of the North. You may even catch its distant echo as you hear them sing in the "chaumer" or bothy some such jovial rant as this:—

Then here's to the plowman o' high renown,

An' may his wages never come down;

For the vera king that wears a crown,

Gets the bite that he eats frae the plowman.

To hear them singing that free Scotch rendering

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of a verse in Ecclesiastes, is in itself a significant indication of the spirit which pervades the rural workers of the North.

I have touched thus far on the Scottish farm servants and their personal characteristics rather than on their social conditions ; and I have done so purposely, for before one can understand the rural problem thoroughly, it is necessary to know something of the farm workers themselves. The "human element" is, indeed, one of the principal factors in the situation.

In a general way most of the readers of the *Scottish Review* no doubt know something of what constitutes the farm worker's daily round. His working day is a long one. At 5 o'clock in the morning his duties commence, and, on many farms, they are never wholly finished until 9 o'clock at night. From 5 to 6, with just a hurried interval for breakfast, the horses must be fed, groomed, and harnessed, ready to leave the stable on the stroke of 6. From 6 to 11 comes the usual work in the fields—ploughing or sowing, reaping or carting, as the case may be. From 11 to 1 is the dinner interval, but at this time, too, the farm labourer has certain allotted tasks to perform. Horses must be groomed and tended, harness cleaned and polished, and every other day a hurried journey has to be made to the village smithy with the plough irons and the like. On the stroke of 1 the team must again leave for the field, where five more hours of ploughing or carting follow. After 6 o'clock the routine work must be done, and then half an hour later the retinue of farm hands, headed by a *douce foreman chiel*', march sedately into the kitchen for the third and last meal of the day.

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After a long and busy afternoon in the fields, a substantial supper is disposed of in an amazingly short space of time. Somewhere between 8 and 9 o'clock the horses must have their handful of supper and a final shake-down for the night. Such, from March to October, is the unromantic round of the Scottish farm labourer in the northern and north-eastern counties. In Fifeshire and the southern districts, the hours of labour are rather shorter. The little kingdom of Fife indeed leads Scotland in one respect, for there the hours of labour are nominally only nine, although the routine work, of course, lengthens the day considerably. In the Lothians and the south-western counties, too, the tendency has recently been to reduce to the lowest possible minimum the stable work which has to be done by the ordinary ploughman. It is no exaggeration to say, however, that taking Scotland all over, the farm labourer's working day is rarely less than eleven or twelve hours. In the winter season, when the sun pays but a hurried visit to these Northern climes, when the fields are frost-bound, and horses and cattle are safe indoors, the hours of labour are somewhat shorter; although even in the long winter mornings there are bits of farm work to be done, which usually suffice to keep the workman jogging along in a more or less leisurely fashion until daylight appears.

Until the advent of the Scottish Farm Servants' Union, Saturday half-holidays were wholly unknown. Even on Sundays, that bright, weekly break in the city artisan's life, there is work to be done which demands the labourer's presence at the farm. Cattle-men are engaged on that "day of rest" from four to

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five hours according to the season of the year, and the horsemen from an hour to an hour and a half, although on the larger farms the work is generally so arranged that every alternate Sunday the ploughman can have a day off to visit his friends or relatives at a distance.

Such is the arduous lot of the Scottish farm servant. Yet, withal, he is by no means a morose or downtrodden individual. To hear him whistling at the plough, one might imagine that he was as free from care as "the blackbird or the mavis that hae whistlin' for their trade." Even the drudgery of farm life has not killed his better qualities, and the farm servant as a type, with all his faults, is one of the most valuable factors in a healthy, national life.

The wages of the Scottish farm workers have shown a decided upward tendency in recent years, but I imagine that most of the ploughmen think their half-yearly fees are still a great deal lower than they ought to be. I know that the lure of Canada has resulted in a scarcity of workers in many rural districts, so that those left behind have been able to command slightly higher wages. I know that the attractions of city life have also depleted the labour market, and that a vigorous trade union agitation has fanned the rural districts as with a breath of new life. I know that the Scottish farm servant can command higher wages than the agricultural labourers of England—partly because he is worth more, and partly because his independent spirit enables him to drive a keener bargain with his employer than is sometimes the case on the other side of the Border. Even self-respect and independence have their market-value in the labour world! Still, in spite of recent

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improvements, a great deal yet remains to be done in respect of wages as well as in other directions.

Wages of farm workers vary greatly in the different districts. Over the greater part of Scotland the engagement is still for a "fee" for the six months or the year, a proportion being payable monthly, and the balance at the end of the half-year. In certain districts in the North there is no regular weekly or monthly payment, and any sums given are advances dependent on the good-will of the farmer. In the Lothians, Lanarkshire, Renfrew, and Dumbarton, the wages are paid weekly although the engagement is an annual one. These engagements are generally entered into at the half-yearly feeding markets, although in the case of married men an increasing number of agreements are being made through registries, or by private arrangement before the market. Married men are provided with houses and certain "perquisites" as part of their wages, while the single men are either provided with a bothy, or are boarded with the farmer and lodged in a sleeping chamber similar to the bothy. At the hiring fairs when engagements were made for the coming summer the "fees" were increased by 20s. or 30s., sometimes even more. The value of the "perquisites" referred to varies so much, however, that to say that capable ploughmen are now receiving £18 per half-year scarcely gives an accurate idea of their actual remuneration. The figures I give, which include the value of perquisites, have been kindly supplied to me by one of the esteemed officials of the Scottish Farm Servants' Union, and may be taken as a fair statement of the average wages paid at present.

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Estimated average weekly wages (including allowances) of married ploughmen, excluding grieves and foremen :—

Caithness . . .	16s.
Sutherland . . .	18s. to 19s.
Ross and Cromarty . . .	18s. to 19s.
Inverness . . .	19s. to 20s.
Nairn . . .	19s. to 20s.
Elgin . . .	19s. to 20s.
Banff . . .	19s. to 20s.
Aberdeen . . .	19s. 6d. to 20s. 6d.
Kincardine . . .	20s. to 21s.
Forfar . . .	21s. 6d. to 22s. 6d.
Perth . . .	22s. to 23s.
Fife and Kinross . . .	22s. to 23s.
Clackmannan . . .	22s. to 23s.
Stirling . . .	22s. to 23s.
Dumbarton . . .	24s. to 25s.
Argyll and Bute . . .	20s. to 21s.
Renfrew . . .	24s. to 25s.
Lanark . . .	23s. to 24s.
Ayr . . .	24s. to 25s.
Linlithgow . . .	23s. to 24s.
Edinburgh . . .	22s. to 23s.
Haddington . . .	21s. to 22s.
Berwick . . .	21s. to 22s.
Peebles . . .	21s. to 22s.
Selkirk . . .	21s. to 22s.
Roxburgh . . .	21s. to 22s.
Dumfries . . .	18s. to 19s.
Kirkcudbright . . .	17s. to 18s.
Wigtown . . .	17s. to 18s.

The "perquisites" referred to range in value from 4s. to 5s. in the case of single men, to 7s. or 8s. for married men. A Kincardineshire farmer gives the

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following interesting figures showing the money value of the allowances :—

ORDINARY COTTARS.

Meal, 6½ Bolls	£5 10 0 per annum
Milk, 4d. per day	6 0 0 „
House and Garden	4 0 0 „
Coals and Firewood (2 tons)	2 0 0 „
Potatoes (1 ton)	2 10 0 „
	<hr/>
	£20 0 0

ORDINARY BOTHY MEN.

Meal, 3½ Bolls	£2 15 0 per annum
Milk, 3d. per day	4 10 0 „
Coals (1½ tons)	1 10 0 „
Bed and Attendance in Bothy	3 0 0 „
	<hr/>
	£11 15 0

It may be that farmers are sometimes tempted to overestimate the money value of the perquisites, but those who are familiar with the prices of agricultural produce and household necessities will not be disposed to quarrel with the figures I have quoted. Moreover, when the farm servant has a fairly large garden, he is generally able to grow the whole of his own vegetables, while the thrifty housewife occasionally manages to add a few shillings to the family purse by keeping poultry, or perhaps a pig.

Taking into consideration the lower cost of living in the country districts, I have little hesitation in saying that the farm servant with 21s. or 22s. can live every bit as comfortably as the city labourer with 25s. or 26s. a week—and the prospects of occasional spells of

unemployment. A wage of 21s. a week, of course, provides only the barest necessities of life. Luxuries are not for the farm labourer and his wife. On the other hand, however, one very rarely finds in the rural districts the degrading accompaniments of poverty, which confront one on every hand in the slums of our great cities.

In the north-eastern counties, where the unmarried labourers are boarded with the farmer, the quality of the food supplied is one of the most prolific causes of trouble. The "thrifty" farmer's wife is a frequent butt of the farm servant's humour—which is not always of the good-natured kind. There is the classic story, for example, of the farm servant who was asked by his "cronie" why he had left a certain situation so hurriedly. "Weel, man," was the reply, "I likit' a' thing at Hilly's weel aneuch except the maet (food). Ye see the way o't was this. First the soo dee'd, an' we sautit her an' ate her. Next ane o' the kye dee'd, an' we ate her. Syne the auld wife dee'd, an' fan the fairmer tell't me to yoke the cairt an' gang into the toon for a hunderweicht o' saut, I thocht it was time to flit." On another occasion the farmer and his ploughmen were seated together by the kitchen fire smoking their pipes after the day's work was done. A loose handful of soot fell down the chimney, bespattering the newly cleaned hearthstone. "Humph," quoth the farmer, with a sullen glower, "that will be a stranger comin' the morn." Promptly came the response of the foreman, who had been brooding over the monotony of the farmhouse diet of kail, cabbage, porridge, and potatoes. "A stranger, said ye, weel I hope to—it's the butcher." In Morayshire and the North—indeed, in the vicinity of

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most of the fishing centres—the frequent appearance of salt fish and herrings on the table is a prolific cause of grumbling. Sometimes this dissatisfaction finds expression in the bothy ballads of the district—ballads all of them strongly redolent of the soil. One such plaint, which I can call to mind, opens somewhat in this wise :—

Come a' ye honest plooman lads, that earn a sax months' pay,
O' beware o' your engagin', an' dinna gang to Berryley,
For it's only chappit tatties an' herrin' when you dine,
An' deevil the wash or splash they get, but a diddy come through the
brine.

Readers of Dr Alexander's *Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk* will remember the admirable account which is given there of how Mrs Birse treated the luckless farm hands. Matters, I think, have improved in this respect during the past twenty years, but farmhouse fare in Scotland is still coarse and unappetising. Among the farm servants of to-day there is a steadily growing consensus of opinion in favour of the abolition of half-yearly engagements and the payment of wages weekly and in cash. Only when that reform has been carried out, will it be possible for farm workers to view with complacency the niggardliness of Mrs Birse of Clinkstyles.

But food and wages—important though they may be—are not the be-all and end-all of life. The poor pay in the rural districts is but one of the least of the causes which have led to the flight of so many thousands of young men and women across the seas to Canada. The absence of any prospects of self-improvement, the blank, hopeless outlook of the farm worker, the lack of leisure

for social intercourse—these are the things that weigh most strongly with the ambitious farm worker. He knows that though he serves his employer faithfully and efficiently for the whole of his working life, he will be but a farm servant still when old age approaches. When the rheumatism seizes him, he is liable to be thrown aside like a broken gaip. The lack of leisure time is one of the most keenly felt grievances of the farm worker, and the leaders of the Scottish Farm Servants' Union have wisely decided to concentrate their efforts at the outset on the half-holiday campaign. The success of this Union is one of the most encouraging features of Scottish rural life. Started at Turriff, in Aberdeenshire, in June 1912, it has already made its influence felt throughout practically the whole of Scotland. There are to-day over 130 branches with a membership of between 7000 and 8000. That is a record of which the farm servants and their friends are justly proud.

The Scottish Farm Servant, the organ of the Union, for which Mr Joseph F. Duncan and Mr Thomas Henderson, B.Sc., are mainly responsible, is one of the brightest and most readable of trade union journals. It would, of course, be an exaggeration to say that the half-holiday has been already secured; but enough has been done to show that, with a little determination and with united effort, the farm servants can now go in and win. Mr Rothney, whose zeal and energy in this campaign have been beyond all praise, assures me that in the Lothians the half-holiday is now quite general. In Fifeshire and in Inverness-shire the farm servants have been standing out firmly for more leisure, while in nearly all the centres of the Union's activities, practical

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steps have been taken towards that end. I have no doubt that legislative intervention—preferably on the lines of the bill introduced by Mr Adamson, M.P.—will be necessary before the victory is completely won; but the progress that has already been made is sufficient to show that a half-holiday for farm servants is a perfectly practicable proposal—and that is an important position gained.

Although I have left the big problem of housing reform almost to the last, it is not because I consider it of secondary importance. Far from it. It is one of the most urgent questions with which the rural reformers of to-day are confronted. One or two preliminary observations may, however, be made. It must not be forgotten that the housing problem—among the farm servants of Scotland, among the agricultural labourers of England drudging for 12s. or 15s. a week, and in the slums of our great industrial centres—is very largely a wages problem. Given a minimum wage of 30s. a week—a vision of Utopia to the 15s. a week farm labourer—and the housing problem would largely solve itself. Housing reformers may rest assured that the farm servant does not dwell in a low-roofed, insanitary cottage because he prefers it, but through sheer necessity. While this is so, a great deal can still be done in the rural districts by a direct frontal attack on the evil, particularly as the housing accommodation is in the majority of cases provided by the farmer or the landowner, or by both conjointly. It is quite true that a substantial improvement has taken place in recent years in the housing accommodation of the unmarried farm workers, but

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there is still ample room for a big step forward. In the old days—not so long ago after all—the farm servant's "chaumer" consisted merely of a low, bare loft, situated generally above the farm stable, and devoid of even the rudest forms of comfort. In most cases there was neither fire nor fireplace. The sole furniture consisted of one or two beds, a chair or two—generally more or less dilapidated—and the rough wooden "kists" which contained the primitive wardrobes of the farm workers. That was precisely the kind of habitation I was introduced to when, as a lad of tender years, I left home to "ser' the fremt." Something I know has been done to make the "chaumers" on modern farms more comfortable and less reprehensible from a sanitary point of view; but there is no danger yet of the unsophisticated stranger mistaking the abodes of the unmarried farm labourers for the luxurious apartments of the laird's sons or daughters, or even for the less fashionable bedrooms in the humblest of farmhouses. A significant incident occurred last autumn, when the members of the Scottish Housing Commission were visiting a certain farm in the North. I hope I shall not be accused of undue lack of reticence, but the incident emphasises what I have been saying so effectively that that must be my excuse for recording it. The Commissioners were examining with interest a bothy on a Northern farm. "What do you think of this place?" said one of the titled members of the party to a Labour colleague. "Well," was the reply, "I think it is a good type of a farm bothy"—and so it was. The place was tidy, the beds were clean, the

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floor was cemented, and the walls were neatly plastered. "Good, did you say!" exclaimed the bluff Scotch baronet, "Why, if I had to live in a place like that, I'd be a d—d anarchist."

It is in connection with the married labourers' quarters, however, that the housing problem assumes its most urgent and menacing form. Indeed, in many districts, the rural housing difficulty constitutes a grave social scandal. Those low, thatched roof cottages, familiar to every rural visitor, may form a picturesque feature of the landscape, but from a sanitary, as well as from a social point of view, they stand condemned.

A valuable statement regarding the married labourers' houses has just been prepared by the Scottish Farm Servants' Union, and, as it is based on investigations covering the whole of Scotland, I quote the following passage in full:—

"The condition of these houses varies greatly in the different districts. Perhaps the worst housing is found in Caithness-shire, but all the northern counties are very unsatisfactory. The traditional cottar-house is what is known as the "but and ben," that is a house with two rooms entering right and left from the door, and without habitable attics. Occasionally there may be a small closet or larder let in between the two rooms. In the far North it is quite common to find earthen floors in the kitchen, with a wooden floor laid on the earth in the ben end. The walls are generally solidly built with stone, but with no damp courses, and in the other houses the plaster is laid direct on to the stone without any lath. In

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some cases there is no plaster, simply wood linings. Thatched roofs are still common in the far North. The result is a damp house without any conveniences, without proper ventilation, and very difficult to keep in proper order. Somewhat similar conditions apply to the counties of Kirkcudbrightshire and Wigtownshire, where there are a great many very poor houses. . . . The newer houses being built are mostly of three rooms, or rather two rooms and a closet. . . . On some estates a very good class of dwelling is being provided, but the number of cases in which this is done is so small, as simply to throw into relief the poor standard over the whole of Scotland."

That account of the housing in the rural districts—as I can testify from personal experience—is not one whit exaggerated. In the but and ben of the farm servants' cottages, one will frequently find overcrowding to such an extent that the ordinary decencies of life can scarcely be observed. The damp walls and floor, with a roof that is all too seldom watertight, sow even in early life the seeds of rheumatism and kindred ailments.

A case of which I have some personal knowledge came before the Land Court in Aberdeen last summer. The tenant, a day labourer on a farm, complained not only of the rent which he had to pay for his little croft, but also of the condition of the outhouses. The roof of the byre, he said, was so bad that it was often necessary to use an umbrella when milking the cow. The remark occasioned some hilarity in court, but before many days were over, Lord Kennedy and his colleagues issued an edict that the byre must be

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reroofed and put thoroughly in order—and the proprietrix of the estate had no option but to obey. The point which I wish to press home is that what is good for the farm labourer's cow is equally good for the farm labourer himself. The owners of the land—in conjunction with the farmers if need be—ought to be compelled to provide comfortable and sanitary houses for the farm labourers as well as for the crofters' cattle. It may be that that is only a partial solution of the problem. The scarcity of farm labourers' houses—either good, bad, or indifferent—is in itself a grave, social menace, and must be tackled on broader and more comprehensive lines. It is evident, moreover, that in many districts the system of half-yearly engagements is breaking down, and in the near future we may expect to see a considerable increase in the number of day labourers. That is already the tendency on the larger farms. Under these circumstances there is a big field for useful work open to our rural parish councils. Steps could be taken by these representative bodies to acquire land and erect suitable dwellings, which could be let to the labourers at reasonable rentals. It is in this direction, I am convinced, that the ultimate solution of the rural housing problem will be found.

WILLIAM DIACK.

Traces of the Celt in the Lowlands

A Plea for Investigation



E are accustomed to talk loosely of the "Highland Line," meaning thereby not the railway which carries us to the most beautiful parts of these islands, but an imaginary distinction which combines the mathematical properties of a line and a point. It has length without breadth and it has position without magnitude. Somewhere, we are told, there is a series of points at which the people of Scotland cease to become Saxon and become Celts. Where precisely that line is to be drawn, no geographer can tell; its history can only be traced to the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is only during the last two hundred years that the name "Celt" has been applied to the Scottish Highlanders, or indeed, to any inhabitant of Great Britain. In 1703, a French antiquary, Paul Pezron, published a book about the people of Brittany, entitled *Antiquité de la Nation et de la Langue des Celtes, autrement appelez Gaulois*. The importance of his book lay in his insistence upon the identity of the language of the Bretons of France and of the inhabitants "of the country of Wales in a canton of Great Britain." The work was almost immediately translated into

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English, and philologists soon discovered that the language of Cæsar's Celts was equally related to the Gaelic of the Scottish Highlanders. The name Celt has therefore been applied to the whole family—Breton, British, and Goidelic—and the term has established itself so firmly that it would be pedantic to offer any criticism upon it. With this realisation of the relationship of the different groups of Celts, there grew up a theory that all the inhabitants of Scotland who do not speak Gaelic belong to a different race, and are, in origin, Saxon or English. This conception has proved useful to historians who wished to show that the Scotsmen who resisted Edward I. were really Englishmen who were unreasonable in their opposition to English rule, and it has been firmly planted in popular imagination by the poet of the *Lady of the Lake*:—

These fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
Were once the birth-right of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.

In point of fact, there is, except for the Lothian counties, no evidence of any racial immigration of Englishmen or Saxons into Scotland, and I have tried to show in my *Relations between England and Scotland*, published in 1901, and in a volume on *Scotland* in the series of "The Making of the Nations," published in 1911, that the disappearance of the Gaelic tongue in the greater part of Scotland was due, not to any racial dispossession of the Celt, but to the gradual adoption of English speech and English civilisation. Malcolm Canmore was a Celtic king governing a Celtic kingdom, but, from the time of his marriage with St Margaret,

English influence gradually became dominant in the Lowlands. The influence of the Saxon Court of Queen Margaret and of the Anglo-Norman courts of her descendants ; the authority of the Roman Church which associated the Celtic tongue with the Celtic ecclesiastical customs which were being superseded ; the new land system, based on English models ; and the spread of English trade and commerce, all combined to bring about a change of speech and customs between the Firth of Forth and the Moray Firth, and between the Solway Firth and the Firth of Clyde. From the time of Margaret's son, David I., the sovereigns were English in speech and in sympathy ; the new ecclesiastics who established the Roman diocesan system and Roman monasticism were also English ; vast tracts of Scottish land were placed under Anglo-Norman nobles ; English merchants came to reside in Scottish towns, and the constitution of Scottish burghs followed English models. Scots Law, before the War of Independence, was based upon English Law, and the institutional history of the country is the history of the adoption of Anglo-Norman ideas.

These are the considerations which, to my mind, explain the difference between the Scottish Lowlands of the time of Malcolm Canmore and the Scottish Lowlands of the time of Alexander III. None of them involve the introduction into Scotland of a Saxon race, though the small population of the burghs must have been mixed with English blood. It is not possible here to explain the evidence for my argument, but I can show very briefly that English contemporary opinion and the opinion of the mediæval historians of Scotland is in

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accordance with my view, and not with Mr J. R. Green's statement that, at the outbreak of the War of Independence, "the farmer of Fife or the Lowlands, and the artizan of the towns remained stout-hearted Northumbrian Englishmen," and that Northumbrian Englishmen were also the inhabitants of the coast districts north of the Tay. Walter of Coventry, an English chronicler of the reign of Edward I., remarks on the difference between sovereigns and people in Scotland. "The Kings of Scotland in recent times," he says, "pride themselves on being French [*i.e.*, Norman] in race and in manner of life, in speech and in culture. They have reduced the Scots to utter subjection, and they admit none but Frenchmen to their friendship and service." Later writers, living in mediæval Scotland, were well aware that the difference between English-speaking and Irish or Gaelic-speaking Scots was a distinction not of race but of civilisation, and the "Scottish tongue" always means Gaelic until the close of the Middle Ages. John Major, writing in the reign of James IV., remarks on the difference of tongue and adds, "but most of us spoke Irish a short time ago." His contemporary, Hector Boece, the first Principal of the University of Aberdeen, states the facts, as it seems to me, quite accurately: "Those of us who live on the border of England," he says, "have forsaken our own tongue and learned English, being driven thereto by wars and commerce. But the Highlanders remain just as they were in the time of Malcolm Canmore, in whose days we began to adopt English manners."

If I am right in believing that mediæval Scotland was not divided by an abrupt racial line of cleavage,

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and if outside the old province of Lothian we have to deal with a gradual change of speech and civilisation, it ought to be possible to obtain some evidence of the gradual disappearance of the Gaelic tongue and Gaelic manners in historical times. We do possess some important general statements. Sir Thomas Craig, writing about the time of the Union of the Crowns, speaks of the decrease of Gaelic-speaking in his own recollection. "I remember the time when the inhabitants of the shires of Stirling and Dumbarton spoke pure Gaelic." In 1618, John Taylor, the Water Poet, lodged at a house in Edzell when "the folks were not able to speak scarce any English." The Old Statistical Account of Scotland records a tradition of Gaelic-speaking in Fifeshire parishes on the Perthshire border, and says that Gaelic was spoken in parts of Wigtownshire as late as the beginning of the seventeenth century and, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was still the language of Perthshire parishes like Aberfoyle, Port of Menteith, and Callander. The great Lord President of the Court of Session, Duncan Forbes of Culloden (1685-1747), tells us that "in some districts bordering upon the Highlands, where within memory the inhabitants spoke the Irish language, wore the Highland dress, and were accustomed to the use of arms, upon the accidental introduction of industry, the Irish language and the Highland dress gave way to a sort of English, the inhabitants took to the plough in place of weapons, and tho' disarmed by no Act of Parliament, are as tame as their Low Country neighbours." The late Mr Michie, minister of Dinnet in Aberdeenshire, has recorded for us a suggestive state-

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ment :—" The Gordons were not of Celtic origin, though they had many Highland possessions, yet such was their influence with their Gaelic-speaking tenants that, in the whole district on the right bank of the Dee, from Balmoral to Glenmuick, of which they were resident proprietors, the old language had disappeared long before the beginning of the [nineteenth] century ; while on the opposite bank of the river, where the proprietors were either Celtic or non-resident, the Gaelic continued to be the household language of almost every family down to 1830 at least."

These scraps of information are most valuable for the historian, apart from their importance for the establishment of my own pet theory, and my object in this paper is to make plea for a scientific investigation into the disappearance of Gaelic as a spoken tongue. It would, unfortunately, be an easy matter to collect all the casual references of which I have just given some illustrations, though it is very probable that some such remarks have escaped my own notice. The great changes of the last hundred years render it improbable that much information about Gaelic-speaking in the Lowlands can be obtained from living memory ; but the fortunes of the language in the Highlands themselves might still be discovered by personal inquiry, and after another half century, this will cease to be possible. Outside the Highlands, and in districts where Gaelic has long ceased to be spoken, the best method, I think, is a careful investigation of the history of the place-names. This work can only be done by a scholar who is intimately acquainted with the Gaelic tongue. The important thing is to note the date at which

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a Gaelic place-name has been corrupted into an Anglicised form. The late Mr Macdonald,¹ in the New Spalding Club volume on the Place-Names of West Aberdeenshire, says that it is not until after the fifteenth century that Camquhyle, the sloping wood, becomes corrupted into Camphill, and that it is not until after the seventeenth century that Badigaan (Bad a' ghobainn), the hamlet of the smith, became corrupted into Bandygown. The inference is that before these dates the inhabitants of these Lowland districts of Aberdeenshire were acquainted with the meaning of the Gaelic place-names, and therefore that a knowledge of the ancient speech of our race was not yet extinct. A very much earlier example is Falkirk. Eaglais breac, the speckled church, had, before the fourteenth century, been translated into the English Faw Kirk, while the Latinised form, *Varia Capella*, retained the original significance of the place-name. Investigations into the varying forms of place-names would yield most valuable results, and there are many documents in existence which local students might consult for this purpose. Lists of personal and family names also give a clue to the racial complexion of a district, though the habit, when surnames became usual, of adopting the name of the great lord of the land seriously interferes with their value. Early lists of burgesses and officials of burghs are free from this objection, and would yield important information about the population of the towns. Any traces of Celtic

¹ I give these etymologies as I find them in Mr Macdonald's book. The Editor kindly points out to me that they are open to criticism, but their accuracy does not affect any point, and, not being a Gaelic scholar, I prefer to shirk the responsibility of offering an opinion.

Traces of the Celt in the Lowlands

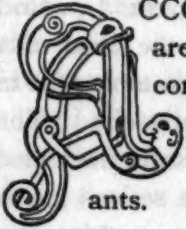
customs or Celtic superstitions, still existing, or existing within historical times, in the Lowlands are also valuable as evidence, or any suggestions of the influence of the Celtic heritage of Lowland Scotland. The unusually close and intimate character of the family bond in Scotland may be the result of tribal and clan influence. Loyalty to the chief of a great Lowland family was often as strong as loyalty to the chief of a Highland clan. We find an interesting example of it in John Knox's interest in the Earl of Bothwell. "The obligation of our Scotishe kyndnes" the Reformer called it. This "Scotishe kyndnes" was often a serious factor in politics, and I am myself inclined to regard it as an example of what I have called the Celtic heritage of the Lowlands.

Readers of this Review who possess the great advantage of a knowledge of the ancient Scottish tongue might confer a great benefit upon the study of Scottish History and aid in the elucidation of many obscure questions by undertaking a local investigation into these and similar points. I hope that our Editor may see his way to open his pages for the publication of any fresh results of the kind.¹

ROBERT S. RAIT.

¹ The Editor of the *Scottish Review* would be pleased to receive and to publish information of the nature indicated by Professor Rait's remarks.

The Passing of the Great Estates

CCORDING to the Beatitudes, the meek are to inherit the earth. Under present conditions, however, it is not improbable that our little planet will first become the property of Cræsus's lucky descendants. Standing on a certain spot in the west coast of Inverness-shire, five or six domains, recently acquired by an equal number of reputed millionaires, can be counted within a radius of thirty miles. And the cry is still they come. Every other week we read of an important estate changing hands, and the activity in the property market seems ever to be increasing.

It was only in the first half of last century that the great Highland properties began to come freely under the hammer, but to-day not more than half-a-dozen of the old Highland families hold their patrimonial estates in anything like their original integrity. In most cases one slice after another had to be sold, in order that their owners might emulate the style of living affected by wealthy Londoners. Often and often every inch of ground had to go to pay gambling debts. The estates were picked up by southern speculators, who expected to benefit by the boom then existing in mutton and wool, and bit by bit the Saxon became lord in the land of the Gael.

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A striking case in point is that of the Clanranald domains. They comprised Arisaig, Moidart, Eigg, Canna, and South Uist—quite a small principality—and for five eventful centuries they had belonged to the puissant MacDonalds. About eighty years ago Ronald George, grandson of the gallant chief who was “out” with the Bonnie Prince, made ducks and drakes of the goodly heritage. The folly and extravagance of this gentleman, who was an intimate friend of the profligate Prince Regent, rendered it necessary to cut off and send to the market one large section after another, until nothing remained but the little, barren, uninhabited island of Riska in Loch Moidart, and the roofless walls of Castle Tioram. For some years the rent-roll of this reckless and improvident representative of an illustrious family amounted to £25,000, but it was altogether inadequate to meet his wanton and insane expenditure. It is a fact worthy of note that of the eleven estates into which the Clanranald property was divided at the downfall of Ronald George, Inverailort alone remains to-day in the hands of the original purchaser's family. All the others have known many owners within the last fourscore years.

A similar process of disintegration and change has been at work all over the Highlands. The old order has been receding, making place for the new. In the Island of Mull twenty-two estates were the subjects of repeated sales during the nineteenth century; and it is, indeed, difficult to mention any island or district in which the most of the land has not known quite a series of proprietors, even within the last fifty years or so.

While the boom in sheep lasted, English capitalists

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were ready enough to buy Highland property, and to pay handsome prices for good grazing lands. They came, they cleared off the native people, and they filled the straths, corries, and hillsides with Cheviot and blackfaced ruminants. In the course of time the sheep-rearing enterprise received a decided set-back. The Gaels that had been expatriated in order that the tacksmen might have unlimited elbow-room, began to raise wool and mutton on their own account in Australia and other colonies. Many of them thrived and prospered; and, by and by, they and their descendants began to compete with their evictors and their successors in the wool market at home. The result was rather serious for the speculative farmers of the Highlands. Instead of wool paying—as it had previously been doing—rent, rates, and all other expenses, it served to meet very little beyond the wages of the shepherds. A worse evil was, however, in store. The splendid steamers plying between this country and the sheep-rearing colonies got to be equipped with huge refrigerators, and the dead carcasses of sheep could be conveyed from the antipodes to these shores in an absolutely fresh and marketable state. These innovations proved disastrous to the farmers at home, and they began to clamour first for abatements, and afterwards for sweeping reductions of rents. The result was almost a debacle. Rents came rattling down; and, for farms which once let readily at £500, it was extremely difficult to find tenants at £250.

Like the tacksmen, the proprietors were nearly all of the speculative type; and, when their incomes dropped so egregiously and without any immediate prospect of

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recovery, they made a wild rush to the auction room. Almost everybody wished to sell, but, at that particular juncture, few people felt disposed to buy. The slump in property was as pronounced, and almost as sudden, as the boom had formerly been; and, for many years, it was difficult or impossible to get rid of any of the larger estates. Pastoral land came to be looked upon as one of the worst possible investments, and everybody fought shy of it. As a matter of fact, the short-sighted policy which had been permitted to turn the Highlands into a vast sheep run, to the almost total exclusion of small-holders and of the hereditary population, began to react with violence on those who foolishly adopted it. That policy was proving itself a grave economic blunder, and an indisputable commercial failure.

The last representative of the distinguished family of Kinlochmoidart, Mr Wm. Robertson-MacDonald, died over thirty years ago. He was a grandson of the celebrated historian, Principal Wm. Robertson. Towards the close of Mr Robertson-MacDonald's life, the property had to be sold under circumstances which illustrate in a very striking manner the grave peril which accompanied the formation of large sheep farms. One of the biggest tacks on the estate was suddenly thrown, during an acute crisis in sheep farming, on the proprietor's hands, and the delivery of the stock necessitated the payment of £10,600. To raise this large sum, the property had to be disentailed at a cost of other £10,000, as compensation to the nearest collateral heir. Unfortunately, these transactions had to take place shortly after the fall of the City of Glasgow Bank, when the interest on money advanced

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was exceedingly high. The heavy sum to be paid annually in the shape of interest, together with the expenses incidental to the management of an estate, was more than the property could meet, especially as markets for wool and stock were almost at their lowest ebb. There was nothing for it but to sell. To the great grief of those who knew the family, the estate passed into strange hands, after being for the long period of three hundred years with the MacDonalds.

About thirty years ago the gods seemed to take pity on the impoverished proprietors. English sportsmen began to realise that it was needless for them to go to Africa, India, and other distant places in quest of big game, when an abundance of red deer were at their disposal in Scotland. Money was abundant, and stalking became fashionable. The devotees of the rifle found that, in Scotland, they could engage in their favourite recreation without cutting themselves adrift from social enjoyments. The northern forests were provided with commodious lodges, luxuriantly furnished and appointed, and offering "a' the comforts o' the Sautmarket"—ay, or of Piccadilly or Mayfair. Successful business men who had accumulated millions in Africa or the United States came along and began to buy large junks of Highland territory. They did not grudge to pay handsomely if the subjects were likely to provide good sport. For the poor, bucolic lairds, the Gordian knot was providentially cut. The affluent sportsmen were to them in fact and reality gods out of the machine. Estates began to be bought and sold in unheard-of numbers, and with singular despatch and lack of haggling. This must be added, however—that only

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the best sporting subjects were in demand, and that the second-rate and third-rate properties still remained a drug in the market.

To indicate the handsome prices given by the new set of purchasers, I may cite two cases. Ardnamurchan was acquired by Mr James Dalgleish in the fifties—when the sheep boom was yet at its height—at something like £82,000. He bought it confessedly as an investment; and, as he was a lawyer and so able to extract the utmost penny from his tenants, there can be no doubt that for many years the estate yielded him a very nice interest. In the eighties and nineties, however, his son and successor became, naturally, very anxious to sell. He recognised that he could lay out his capital to better advantage than that offered by the moors and straths of Ardnamurchan. Another incentive to sell was the fact that his tenants were getting somewhat restive and self-assertive. About sixteen years ago the unexpected happened, and a buyer appeared on the scene. Mr C. D. Rudd, a South African millionaire, was on the look-out for an estate with good sporting possibilities, and the claims of Ardnamurchan were brought under his notice. Its natural advantages and general features appealed to him, the result being that a bargain was struck at about £108,000. It was an excellent stroke for the vendor. For pastoral purposes the property would be difficult to sell at half the sum that it actually realised, but Mr Rudd was not out for sheep or the money which they give. On obtaining possession, he spent large sums in improving the estate from a sporting point of view. As their leases expired, nine large farms were divested of their

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woolly stock and converted into a deer forest, the area of which now extends to about 22,000 acres.

Then there is the case of Dupplin, Perthshire. By the sale of this historic property in 1910, there was concluded one of the largest transactions carried out for many years in the land market of Scotland. The estate, which had been in the hands of the Hays of Kinnoull for several centuries, was purchased by Sir John A. Dewar, Bart., M.P. for Inverness-shire. There was no intention on the part of the buyer to create a deer forest; but, apart from deer, the sport afforded by the property is of a superior character. "The bag should include," says Watson-Lyall, "about 450 or 500 pheasants, 600 or 700 partridges, 70 woodcock, 20 or 30 capercailzie, 70 wild duck, besides snipe, blackcock, teal, plover, roe-deer, wild-pigeon, 200 or 300 hares, and some 3000 rabbits. There is first-rate salmon fishing in the river Earn, just below the castle, and excellent trout fishing in Dupplin Loch, in the policies. The salmon fishing in the Earn is frequently magnificent." A more desirable residential place it would be difficult to mention; and, although the exact price has not been disclosed, it is believed to have exceeded £250,000 sterling.

During the nineteenth century all the estates in the Outer Isles changed hands. In the same period most of the properties in the Inner Hebrides were also bought and sold. Those of the Island of Mull, I have already referred to; and others that might be mentioned in this connection include Kildalton, Colonsay, Coll, Muck, Eigg, Rhum, Eilean Shona, and most of the Skye properties.

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Within the last ten years or so a large number of estates, situated in all parts of the country, have passed from one set of owners to another. Only a very few of them can be mentioned here. In Argyllshire, there were: Eriska (bought by Mr A. Clark-Hutcheson); Meallmore, Lochfyneside (bought by Mr Edward Aitken); Ardsheal, Ballachulish (bought by Mr A. P. Cameron); Ardkinglas (bought by Sir Andrew Noble); and Lerags (bought by Mr Wm. C. MacEwan, Edinburgh). In Stirlingshire, there occur to me Leckie (bought by Sir George Younger, Bart., M.P.), and Blair Drummond (several buyers). In Perthshire, I may mention West Tempar (bought by Mr Henry H. Cochrane); Flichity (bought by Sir Wm. Beardmore, Bart.); Aberuthven (for many generations owned by the Grahams of Inchbrackie); Gask (bought by Mr George A. Buchanan); Findynate (bought by Miss Jessie MacEwan, Edinburgh); Strathallan and Tullibardine (bought by Sir James Roberts, Bart.). In Ross-shire I recall, among many others, Rhynie (bought by Mr John Ross), and New Kelso, Attadale, and Nonach (bought by Baron von Schröder). In the Lowlands, the market has been almost equally active.

It is difficult to state with any precision the aggregate area which has recently been the subject of sale. No official returns are available. Within the last ten years it must have amounted, however, to many hundreds of thousands of acres, and within the last century, to several millions.

To come to the year of grace, 1914. Perhaps there has never been a time when so many properties were

offered for sale as are offered at the present moment. A person in quest of land must be very hard to please if he cannot find a place to suit him in the long lists issued by the different agents. The subjects range in size from a few thousand to half a million acres, and most of them have their sporting resources pretty well developed. They are situated in all parts of the country, north and south, east and west, insular and mainland.

There is Alva, Stirlingshire, belonging to Miss Johnstone. It has an area of 6600 acres, and on its moor a nice bag of grouse and other game is generally obtained. Its waters give some fishing, and it is a suitable place for the sportsman of limited means. Glencripesdale, Argyllshire, is more pretentious. It belongs to Messrs Newton, and extends to 26,000 acres. It consists mostly of a deer preserve, and about 45 stags are shot in the course of a season. Grouse and other game are also fairly plentiful, and there is excellent fishing and yachting. There are to be disposed of the estates of the Earl of Kintore, whose ancestors, for hundreds of years, have held these lands in the counties of Aberdeen and Kincardine. Keith Hall and the other properties provide very fair shooting, and there is very good salmon fishing in long stretches of the rivers Don and Urie. Kildalton, Islay, is owned by Mr Iain Ramsay, and runs to 51,000 acres. The sporting facilities are exceptionally good, and afford a great variety of game. From 30 to 40 stags are killed each autumn, and the bag of grouse has been known to reach 900 brace. Of woodcock and snipe there have been shot in a season 460 and 550

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respectively. There is capital salmon and trout fishing in the river Laggan, and in numerous lochs on the estate. The golf links at Machrie, upon the property, form one of the best courses in the British Isles. The estates of Lochnell and Bonawe, Argyllshire, are to be sold. They have, hitherto, been held by the Campbells, and are of much historic interest. They give a very nice bag of grouse and other game. Castle Menzies, the ancestral home of the chiefs of the Clan Menzies, is, at present, offered for sale, together with appurtenant property of 90,000 acres, and embracing the well-known shootings of Castle Menzies, Foss, Rannoch Lodge, Camusericht, Talladh-a-bheithe, Craganour, and Corrievarkie. The whole forms, indeed, a tempting plum for the sportsman with the long purse. Mr William Stuart, who a few years ago bought from the late Duke of Sutherland the estate of Drumbeg (annual value, £25,000), has now added to his property by purchasing from the present Duke various subjects, including a deer forest, a sheep farm, and a number of small holdings. The rental of the land now acquired is £2700. The Duke has decided to sell other portions of his vast estates, and there will be offered by auction, early in October, various lots of the aggregate area of 300,000 acres. Without entering into details, I may state that they include several very fine deer forests, a large number of grouse moors, and long stretches of prolific salmon rivers. The largest property to be disposed of is that of the Isle of Lewis, belonging to Major Duncan Matheson. Its area is about 500,000 acres. From a sporting point of view this sea-girt domain consists principally of deer

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forests and grouse moors, with innumerable lochs and rivers. There are eleven shootings, with which are divided the salmon and loch fishings. The following is an average bag: 200 deer, 4500 grouse, 1400 snipe, 300 woodcock, 2200 salmon, 7000 sea-trout, 2200 brown trout, and a large number of hares, rabbits, wildfowl, plover, and curlew.

These are a few of the north-country estates at present in the market. They are here specified in order to show that, in advertising them for sale, stress is laid alone on the fact that they offer outstanding attractions to lovers of the gun and rod. Any reference to their sheep-carrying capabilities, if made at all, is always of the briefest and baldest character. The sellers fully recognise that if their properties are to go, an appeal must be made to the sportsman, and that it is vain to endeavour to entice the investor. It is a patent and suggestive fact that the lands of the Highlands are rapidly passing into the hands of men of prodigious wealth, who regard them solely as happy hunting grounds where to hold high holiday for a few months every year.

Many people view the advent of the sporting proprietor with grave suspicion and concern. They seem to fancy that, as he has turned laird merely in order to follow his predilection for shooting and fishing, he can have no regard or feeling for his tenants. So, to them, he seems to represent the *ne plus ultra* for harshness and oppression. They have been so long accustomed to the rigours of landlordism, that they look at every change of policy or circumstance as one for the worse. This disposition has given rise to the

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familiar Gaelic proverb—"Olc math an t-olc eolach, is fearr e na an t-olc aineolach"—which is the equivalent of, "Better endure the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of."

It will be found, however, that where the millionaire has actually bought and come into possession, he is generally preferred to his predecessor. A marked difference is observable in his personal intercourse with his humbler tenants. At kirk and market the old laird looked at his crofters as if they were transparent objects—he saw them as if he saw them not. To address a kindly word to them in passing would, according to his ideas of convention, be an act of degradation and sheer depravity. The average sporting millionaire's outlook is entirely different. Without any appreciable loss of dignity or self-respect, he is hail-fellow-well-met with all his tenants, and makes little or no distinction between the poorer and the better-off people on his estates. He subscribes handsomely to the funds of local clubs and societies, acts as commodore at the local regatta, and attends the local athletic fixtures. Every local movement calculated to brighten the lives of the people commands his patronage and active support, and he often presents the principal village with a small library and well-equipped recreation rooms. In his business relations with the people who till his soil, he is guided by fairness and generosity. His money-grabbing predecessor looked upon the tenants as mere rent-producing machines, designed by nature and nature's god to pour money into his pocket, without daring to expect any tangible return.

It never occurred to the greedy, old-fashioned

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lairdie that "rank" has its duties as well as its privileges. With regard to Arisaig, we read in Somers' *Letters from the Highlands*—"There is no work whatever going on upon the estate. Lord Cranstoun and his factor are both absentees. The one lifts the rent, and the other carries it off and consumes it; and this comprehends the whole relation between landlord and tenant in Arisaig." Take the case of Ardnamurchan. Giving evidence before the Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands, 1892), Mr James Nisbet, crofter, Ormsaigbeg, was asked—"You say that the large farmers get houses and fences put up for them, but that nothing is being done for the small tenants?" The answer was illuminative. "I put a roof on my house," said Mr Nisbet, "and on my byre and barn, and I had to pay Mr Dalglish for every stick of it, and I had to get it built and thatched myself. The very stobs required to fence the place we had to pay threepence each for, in addition to the freight by boat. That is no encouragement to improve." (It must be explained that the "sticks" and "stobs" referred to by Mr Nisbet were from the estate plantations, but the smaller tenants had to pay as much for them as any outsider would have to do.) These two cases are not singular. Almost every other Highland proprietor treated his crofters in very much the same way, their invariable policy being to squeeze as much as possible out of them without giving anything in return.

Proprietors of the new order act on entirely different principles. They evince a desire to help and not to hinder their humbler tenants in their efforts at improvement. Let me cite the case of one wealthy new-comer,

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with the management of whose estate I happen to be personally familiar. No sooner did he come into possession than he began to devise ways and means to provide his crofters with better dwellings and steadings than those they had hitherto possessed. The people to be benefited numbered about 150, and, even for a millionaire, the undertaking was somewhat arduous. In formulating a building scheme, he naturally invoked the aid of his legal advisors. These set to work on the traditional lines of getting the best of the crofter, and driving with him the hardest bargain possible. By this time, however, the tenants were under the protective wing of the Crofters Act, and they declined to be driven into an almost one-sided arrangement. The proprietor was in a dilemma; but, being a sensible man, he decided to consult Sheriff Brand and the other members of the Crofters Commission. The learned Sheriff read the millionaire a severe homily on the unfairness of his previous proposals, and indicated a course which he might expediently follow if he was sincere in his wishes to help his tenants. The man of wealth proved his sincerity by adopting every single suggestion made by the Commission. He set aside the sum of five thousand pounds as a revolving fund, out of which advances were to be made for building purposes. No interest was to be charged, but the actual sum advanced was to be repaid in fourteen yearly instalments. This magnificent scheme is rapidly transfiguring the estate, so far as crofter houses are concerned. The kind-hearted gentleman did not stop at providing capital for building. He became aware that, for over half a century, the crops of his crofters

had been yearly damaged by the inroads of deer. At enormous expense he had every holding on his property effectively protected by a six-foot iron fence, and now the tenants are able to enjoy the fruits of their labours without any quadruped daring to make them afraid. Another millionaire proprietor in Perthshire, who acquired his estate four or five years ago, was, perhaps, the only Scottish landlord who ever appeared before the Land Court, and intimated his readiness and pleasure to facilitate in every way possible the formation of small holdings for which applications had been made.

In the *Times* of 18th April last, a Dorking correspondent writes :—

“In the early part of the nineteenth century the Kirkton of Balquhiddy was as poor, the houses as bad, the sanitary arrangements as non-existent, the farming as backward as in most Highland villages. The father of the present owner of Stronvar [Mr James Carnegie] bought the property. The result of his administration was such that the son of a former crofter, returning from the Colonies to see his native place, went straight up to Stronvar, though quite a stranger to the laird, to thank him personally for the marvellous transformation from what he remembered in his youth.”

Yes, the much-enduring Gaels view the passing away of the great estates with much equanimity, often with unbounded satisfaction. They do not regret the exit of the sordid, mercenary, cold-blooded proprietor, who regarded his farms as he would regard lots of copper or rubber. They welcome the jovial, broad minded, open-handed sporting landlord, who wishes to enjoy life himself and is disposed to help others to

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enjoy life also. The disappearance of sheep, and the multiplication of deer they regard with mild amusement. What matters it to them whether yonder hill is stocked with sheep or deer, so long as it is closed against them and their class. And they do not forget that sheep, and sheep alone, were directly responsible for the depopulation of their country, while they are not aware that deer ever did them or their ancestors any serious injury.

One other point—and perhaps the most interesting of all—must be dealt with in a line or two. The passing of the great estates reminds us of the fact that it was almost exactly eight centuries ago the feudal system was foisted on Scotland by the English-reared David I., and that the practice began of making Court favourites happy with huge grants of land. This system of land tenure—so foreign to the genius of the Celtic race—is seen at its worst in the Land of the Gael, and has been responsible for untold poverty, misery, oppression, and tyranny. Its general effect has been to make the rich richer, and keep them rich, and the poor poorer, and keep them poor. It placed in the hands of the lord of the countryside more power than could safely be entrusted to any individual, and history abounds with stories of the wanton abuse of this power.


It would seem, however, that the day of retribution and restitution is at hand. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. The great land-owning families are engaged in a life-and-death struggle in defence of those properties and emoluments that they have so long enjoyed. One by one they are worsted in the grim battle, and their possessions pass into strange hands. The great estates are

crumbling away, and the ill-conceived and ill-omened fabric reared by King David is tottering to its fall. May we hope that on its ruins may be erected a better and a nobler system—a system which will bring to the people of Scotland not suffering, degradation, anguish, and distress, but hope, liberty, prosperity, and happiness.

What form will the new conditions assume? and on what principles will the land-system of the country be founded, when the reformer has succeeded in carrying his ideas into effect? The tendency is, and will doubtless continue to be, in the direction of diminished sporting areas. I believe the popular idea, and the idea that will ultimately prevail, is that all lands under 1000 or 1500 ft. in altitude ought not to be devoted to the rearing of either sheep or deer, but to the maintenance of the mixed stocks kept on small holdings and medium-sized farms. For economic reasons, however, it will always be advisable to reserve the uplands for sporting purposes. Grounds which cannot be utilised as small farms will be kept under game and deer in preference to sheep. The rural people are not likely to forget that the capitalist farmer has ever been a tyrant—infinitely more so than the sportsman.

Deer forests at about sea-level generally spell an anomaly, but on the high tops they are, and will always be, quite appropriate and even desirable. The existence of huge sheep runs at any elevation or in any situation can only be regarded as inexpedient and objectionable. I repeat, therefore, that the exit of the selfish, mercenary landowner, and the advent of the breezy, manly, fair-minded sporting proprietor, are to be hailed with unqualified satisfaction—even with acclamation.

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OETHE somewhere remarks that "animated enquiry into cause does great harm."

The observation cannot be regarded as proper to general application; but its wisdom in particular cases is not to be gainsaid. The animated pursuit of "first principles" is apt to dazzle and bewilder even the most learned, the least unsober, and the most astute; whilst the effect of so much theory-running on minds which cannot justly be so classed, and which stand outside the charmed circle of professed scholarship, is wont to be as irritating as it too often is perplexing and misleading. The proverb goes that when thieves fall out honest men stand some chance of coming to their own; but the quarrels and disputes of scientific men do not commonly have so fortunate an issue. Instead, they tend to engender a cloud of false witnesses to the truth in the shape of puncturable theory—highly controversial opinions which are well calculated to leave the general public cold, discouraged, sceptical, annoyed, and, of course, wofully confused and totally uninformed.

In no field of human knowledge, perhaps, has this tendency to bitter controversy, and the resulting confusion of thought, been more marked than it has been in that which is consecrated to the pursuit of "first

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principles" in regard to racial origins, and to biological and ethnological questions in general. Here, every scientific man is, more or less, a law unto himself. The uncertainty surrounding the problem to be solved is only too vividly reflected on the heaving surface of the sea of rival opinion which encompasses it on all sides. And so fiercely is the battle waged, that little or no attempt is made to conceal, or to disguise, the various irrelevancies and contradictions to which the warmth of the combat has precipitated their authors. Thus, whilst Professor Virchow denounces the idea of race as being the consequence of "the loss of sound common-sense," he, the next moment, pleads for the survival of "beautiful, self-dependent personalities" amongst the sons of men. In the heat and ardour of battle, it has apparently escaped that learned man that the "self-dependent personality" is to the race much what the source is to the river, or the spring to the fountain. The ethnographer, Ratzel, affirms that the fusion of all mankind is a consummation which it is our "aim and duty," and should be our "hope and wish" to bring about; yet the seemingly impossible would not appear to be already sufficiently remote and chimerical for him. He must needs gratuitously heighten his difficulties, and complicate the issue, by banishing the negro without the pale of the coming racial millennium.

Il n'y a plus de races pure, says Topinard. But is "purity" of race a question which much concerns us? Does it greatly matter whether or no "first principles," as they regard race and racial origins, are capable of being conducted to the haven which, in his dreams, the

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speculative ethnologist has provided for them? The probability would appear to be that the mists and clouds which obscure the origins of races will never be dispelled. And even though this mystery of mysteries should one day be revealed unto us, what interest would attach to its solution, apart from the purely scientific one? We are, doubtless, "heirs of the ages"; but heirs, let us remember, in whose veins flows the blood of divers races. What could it profit us though we should know for certain that the original home of the Arians was in Europe, instead of being on the banks of the Ganges, where accepted opinion is presently agreed to deposit it? And, after all, what, racially, is an Arian; and can we be certain that he is "pure," even supposing we are able to define him? "The Arians," says the German Professor, R. Hartmann, "are an invention of the study, and not a primeval people." Solomon Reinach in his *L'Origine des Aryens* is equally emphatic, and just as sceptical. He characterises popular belief in the Arian as *tout simplement une absurdité*. Even those scholars who subscribe to this ethnological creed are by no means all agreed that the Arian is sprung from a single racial source. "The supposition," says Ratzel, "that all these peoples (the Indo-Europeans) have a uniform origin is not necessary, or probable."

It would be easy to continue multiplying teasing examples of this kind; but doubtless enough has already been said to show the thorny nature of the problem here presented. Scientists are agreed, at all events for the present, greatly to differ; and so long as this is the case the lay public is like to content itself with looking on at the biologist's pursuit of

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racial "first principles," much as a crowd looks on at a clown's cricket match, or a philosopher might be expected to watch the motions of a boy armed with a butterfly-net. In fine, the scientists, by reason of their differences, have largely themselves to blame for the existence of a state of affairs, whose principal constituent consists in a widespread belief that biological studies are a delusion, or at best, a will-o'-the-wisp.

To refuse to join in the chase of "first principles," however, is one thing; to decline to believe the evidences of our senses is another. Though we should discard all belief in racial purity of blood, yet we would still be at liberty to attach some credit and importance to personality—especially to personality in the aggregate, and as it reveals itself in the race and in the nation.

Sidonia says, in *Coningsby*, "race is everything: there is no other truth. And every race must fall which carelessly suffers its blood to become mixed." We all know, by reason of certain experiments conducted on animals and plants, that crossing obliterates characters, and that the sad result of promiscuity is the mongrel. But the Disraelian maxim quoted above is not intended to commit us to the wild theory of "purity" of blood or race, but to put us on our guard against promiscuous crossing—breeding, that is to say, with racial elements which are inferior to ourselves. The Sidonian saying is not a stroke aimed at nationalism and the national creed, as some might suppose; for all the great peoples of the world have been and are, mixed races; and we are entitled to assume that Disraeli knew this.

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There has been a good deal said and written recently in these islands touching "race" and "nation." The English claim, and justly claim, to be a nation; but forgetful or unconscious of their own mixed origin, many of that people seem very unwilling to allow to others that distinction which they would be the first to claim with indignation, were any attempt made to deny it to themselves. It seems to be necessary to remind these objectors that "purity" of race is not necessary to nationality, which is composed of a variety of elements, into the precise constituents of which we need not here enter. To argue as Mr A. J. Balfour has done in a pamphlet remarkable for partizan prejudice and historical ignorance, that Ireland is not a nation because it contains pre- and post-Celtic racial elements, is absurd. Ireland, though she lacks many of the outward and visible signs of nationality, is just as much a nation as France, of which it has been observed by a recent writer, "France is a racial medley, an epitome of Europe." Yet this author clearly recognises that the fact that his country consists of a "medley" of races has nothing to do with the continuance of the French nation, "which will endure," he adds, "so long as her soil is tilled, her language spoken, and her ideal kept alive."¹ But the situation of France in regard to the point which we are here considering is by no means singular. All the existing great Powers of Europe are composed of peoples whose blood is not "pure." To argue that nationality is not to be conceded to these countries, on account of the "impure" origin of their "nationals," would

¹ *French Civilisation in the Nineteenth Century*, by Albert Léon Guérard.

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be to hold the language of fools or factionists. Neither should the application of this general principle be made dependent on the size of a country, or its existing political situation ; for what is sauce for the goose in this case should be equally meat for the gander.

Having thus briefly, and at no great pains, refreshed our emancipation from the theories and dogmas of the scientists, as well as from the crude and partial superstitions of the mere politician, we are now in a position to inhale the pure upper air of plain common sense. We have seen that "first principles" constitute a luxury which, in respect to racial problems, no one save a biologist or an ethnologist can afford to indulge in ; that "pure blood" does not exist, or, if it does exist, subsists in such small quantities as to be negligible for our purpose ; that crossing obliterates characters ; and finally, that the racial theory offers substantial grounds of reasonable belief. If anyone should still be of Virchow's opinion, that "the sense of race" can only be explained by "the loss of sound common sense," I would strongly urge him, as an inexpensive and agreeable cure for his distemper, to fetch a voyage to, say, France. Though, on his arrival at Calais or Boulogne, he should not be able to *see* the French nationality, yet he would be a singularly unobservant traveller who should not experience the "atmosphere" in which that delightful quantity resides. Let us now proceed to carry this present enquiry a step farther, and consider what racial face common opinion has conspired to place on the inhabitants of our own country.

According to the current idea, Scotland is divided

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into two parts—highlands and lowlands. These terms are largely justified by the physical configuration of the land in which we live; but it is obvious that there is attached to them, in common usage, a *racial* signification, apart altogether from the purely physical ground on which their employment rests. It is vulgarly believed, in other words, that the population of the highlands is Celtic, whilst that of the lowlands is Teutonic, in blood. We shall find these popular beliefs very clearly epitomised by Mr Peter Macnair, F.R.S.E., in an article written by him, and published in the *Glasgow Herald*, on some date in July of last year. In that paper Mr Macnair says, "the early inhabitants of our country were pushed away to the more inaccessible regions of the west and north by the incoming of a taller and more powerful race of a Celtic type (the Gaels or Goidels), from whom are descended the great mass of the Gaelic speakers who inhabit the highlands of Scotland. In their turn, the Celts were driven to the highlands by the Teutons, and up till the present day the highland boundary line has existed as a sharp line of demarcation between the Celtic and Teutonic races." To those who know a little more about the early history of our country than this author appears to have acquired, in or out of school, such obsolete language will appear extraordinary enough; but statements and theories still more wild and extravagant are yet in store for us. For instance, having erected his "highland boundary line," Mr Macnair proceeds to "link up" geography with the distribution of genius in the following truly amazing manner. "It is a remarkable fact (says he), however it may be

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explained, that the great highland boundary line is also a line of demarcation between the existence and the non-existence of genius in Scotland. If we glance over the pages of Scottish history we find few, if any, outstanding names that occur within the highland district. Though its scenery has inspired such great poets as Scott, Wordsworth, and Burns, yet it has not produced any poets of the first order. . . . We cannot here enter into a discussion as to whether this is due to the inherent absence of genius in the Celtic race, or whether it is simply due to the lack of opportunity."

Many a "remarkable fact" proves to be, on closer inspection, nothing more or less than a common or garden mare's nest; and Mr Macnair's peculiar discovery that genius is not to be encountered on the Celtic side of his "great highland boundary line," deserves to be classed amongst some of the more foolish of the exploits of the ass of Apuleius. It is indeed astonishing that a journal of the standing and reputation of the *Glasgow Herald* should insult the gravity of its columns with such unmitigated nonsense. A single shot should suffice to bring the crazy edifice which Mr Macnair has built for himself tumbling about his ears. How does Mr Macnair account for the existence of undoubted Celtic genius on the non-Celtic side of his imaginary "boundary line" before the terms "highlands" and "lowlands" arose in Scotland? If he should reply that his remarks apply to a period subsequent to the erection of this alleged line, he would not thereby improve the prospects of his case one iota. The expressions "highlands" and "lowlands," as applied to Scotland, are late-comers into even English speech.

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To this very day there exist no precise equivalents in the Gaelic language.¹ Moreover, how does Mr Macnair propose to reconcile the alleged non-existence of Celtic genius in the mountainous parts of Scotland with the undoubted prevalence of supreme talent amongst the Celts of other lands? Indeed, the longer one looks at, and the more narrowly one examines, the unhappy, grotesque, and misshapen offspring of Mr Macnair's disordered imagination, the more does one marvel at his folly in conceiving, and his audacity in giving birth to it. That a range of low hills which, in many parts of the country through which they run, sink to the level of the surrounding plains should be regarded by any thinking being as a sufficient boundary and barrier between the existence and non-existence of genius, is one of the vainest conceits and the most whimsical notions ever propagated by the mind of misguided man.

¹ That poetry, of all the arts, should be chosen by Mr Macnair for the purpose of instituting his invidious and blundering comparison would be the unkindest cut of all, were it not that, to put it bluntly, he obviously does not know what he is talking about. Has Mr Macnair never heard of Duncan Ban MacIntyre and Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair—two of the greatest poets of any age or clime? "In Nature poetry, the Gaelic muse may vie with that of any other nation. To seek out and watch and love nature, in its smallest phenomena as in its grandest, was given to no people so early and so fully as to the Celt."—Professor Kuno Meyer, in his Preface to *Ancient Irish Poetry*. The greatest Latinist of his time and country was George Buchanan, a Gaelic-speaking man. England's most brilliant historian, Lord Macaulay, also had the misfortune to be born on the wrong side of Mr Macnair's "highland line." It would be easy to raise a cloud of venerable witnesses to the absurdity of this writer's views, but their character is no doubt a sufficient refutation.

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It will doubtless have been observed that Mr Macnair states, in his article, that the Celts in their turn "were driven to the highlands by the Teutons." Here, according to the views of this writer, we have a definite historical fact. I demand proof of it. *When* were the Celts driven by the Teutons into the highlands? Mr Macnair does not state the date or the period at which this alleged expulsion occurred; but it is not to be believed for one moment that a change or revolution of so vast importance could have taken place without leaving some record of its existence behind it, which, singularly enough, is exactly what it appears not to have done.

Some years ago the eminent Celtic scholar, the late Dr MacBain, turned with impatience from some historical *obiter dicta* pronounced by Mr Andrew Lang, with the remark that the opinions he objected to as being false and ill-founded would probably continue to enjoy credit, "let Celtic scholars say what they will." A similar unkind fate would appear to dog the footsteps of historical learning. A lie circulates as readily as does the coin of the realm; but nothing is more difficult than to induce truth to forsake the well in which she modestly resides, and to take her chance amidst the rough and tumble of the world. It will surprise no one, therefore, to know that as long ago as 1862, Mr E. William Robertson, the learned and accomplished historian of *Scotland under Her Early Kings*, published in the appendix to that work, an elaborate and scholarly refutation of the views which, in the year 1914, Mr Peter Macnair, F.R.S.E., F.G.S., ventilates, doubtless "with much acceptance," as the saying goes, in the columns

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of the leading newspaper of Scotland! In that treatise, Mr Robertson, taking for his text the very words which Mr Macnair has used, namely, that the Celts were driven to the highlands by the Teutons, proceeds to demolish the whole "Theory of Displacement," as the historian styles it, so far as it has been applied to Scotland. Mr Robertson's views deserve to be carefully studied in their entirety. It is impossible to give any adequate idea of the force and cogency of his arguments by means of extracts; but one or two of the more important of his conclusions may be briefly glanced at.

In the first place, we are invited to reflect that that part of the kingdom out of which the Scots or Celts are alleged to have been driven by the Teutons, constituted the heart of the ancient *Scotia*. It is incumbent, therefore, on the advocates of "Displacement" to produce proof setting forth the period and the manner in which the supposed expulsion took place. When David I. ascended the throne, the eastern counties were for the most part in the possession of a native proprietary, and it is a fair inference from that fact that the common people were also Celts, or at all events Gaelic-speaking. Further, we know that, though Norman-French was the language of the court of Alexander III., yet when that king assumed the crown, Gaelic was still the vernacular be-north the Forth. It is obvious, therefore, that if the Celts were ever driven out by incoming Teutons, their expulsion must have taken place at some date subsequent to the reigns of the two kings above mentioned. History records no such exodus, for the good and sufficient reason that it never took place. In 1434 one Hendry, an English traveller to

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Scotland, found that Gaelic was still widely spoken in the lowlands of Moray and Aberdeenshire; whilst in 1563 English spies report that the inhabitants of the district of Carrick were mostly Gaelic speakers. "The echoes of the old tongue," says Professor MacKinnon in his article on "Gaelic" in Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, "lingered in the uplands of Galloway down to the eighteenth century." In the face of facts such as these, which could be easily multiplied, it is absurd to contend that the Celts were "driven out." The whole "Theory of Displacement," says Mr Robertson, is a myth. Expulsion on so large a scale as that evidently contemplated by the advocates of "Displacement," would have resulted in "one general blaze of insurrection." And he adds these significant words: "No conquest of any description which could account for a wide displacement of the native population in favour of foreign settlers is traceable at any period of authentic history when such a settlement is supposed to have taken place." I submit, therefore, that we are amply justified in concluding that the lowlands of Scotland be-north the Forth, and the greatest part of the south-west of Scotland, are now inhabited by the descendants of those Gaelic-speaking people by whom they were possessed at the earliest time of which authentic history takes cognisance. On the other hand, it may be allowed that the people of the Lothians are mainly Teutonic in blood, as are indeed many of the modern Gaelic-speaking people of the Lewis and the northern mainland counties. "The Berwickshire people," says Dr Beddoe,¹ are mainly Anglian by race, . . . though of course there

¹ *Anthropological History of Europe.*

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has been a slow infiltration of the general Scottish (*i.e.*, Celtic) population."

But though the "Theory of Displacement" be a myth, yet we are not to conclude from thence that what is called "penetration," on the part of Teutonic settlers, did not take place in Scotland. Such "penetration" as there was, however, was mainly of an aristocratic character, and represented a limited movement. "Wide baronies," says Mr Robertson, "were made over to the great Norman feudatories;" but in the districts wherein these grants took effect the "verdict of the neighbourhood" continued to be voiced through the channel of the lesser Gaelic gentry—the *probi homines*, or *mailthean*, who remained undisturbed by these great gifts of land. Thus, when Patrick de Blantyre was served heir to his ancestral Renfrewshire barony, the jury were all Gaels, and must have been his "peers," barons, or freeholders by charter. Renfrew was early given as a barony to the Steward; but the verdict of the neighbourhood was pronounced by a Gaelic jury. But even this limited aristocratic invasion (which in no ways disturbed the lesser nobility or the commonalty of the country) has been greatly exaggerated. It has been hastily assumed "that every territorial surname denotes the presence of a foreign settler," says Mr Robertson, "when in reality it is only the mark of tenure by charter." The family of de Strathbogie sprang from a son of the Earl of Fife; that of de Ogilvie, took its rise from a junior branch of the Earls of Angus; and names like de Ergadia, de Insulis, de Atholia, de Galloway, and many more of a similar kind—all these are appellations which belong to families of undoubted native origin.

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"The whole policy of David and his successors," adds our author, "appears to have been founded on a principle diametrically opposed to this 'Theory of Displacement.'" His aim was to feudalise the "settled portions" of his kingdom—not to make a desert of it. The "great Innovator," the mildness of whose rule, the cautiousness of whose character, and the moderation of whose aims have been liberally praised by all our historians, was hardly the sort of prince lightly and deliberately to risk the estrangement and the exasperation of his people, together with the creation of endless difficulties for himself and his successors, by going about to expel the most numerous and the most powerful portion of the inhabitants of his kingdom. Besides, why should he have done so? "David," says Ailred his friend and principal biographer, was "beloved of the Scots."¹ Is it conceivable or in the least degree likely that he had been so regarded by them, had he acted that part towards his Scottish subjects which the expulsionists, past and present, would appear to ascribe to him, by implication, if not openly and explicitly?

But though neither David, his predecessors, nor his successors expelled the Scots from those districts of the lowlands which their descendants now inhabit, yet, in the introduction of feudalism into Scotland by David I. is to be found the true source of all those popular errors and superstitions which, gathered together under the one head of the "Theory of Displacement," conspire to render so much of our historical

¹ That is, his Gaelic-speaking subjects. In all formal writings it was then the custom to distinguish the natives from the "Franks" (Normans) and others of the king's "men" not of Celtic birth.

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and semi-historical literature irreconcilable with the truth, and a travesty upon the real facts of the national story. Both David Hume and Dr Robertson were of opinion that the early history of Scotland is little worth attention. "Truth," says the latter historian, "begins to dawn in the second period,¹ with a light, feeble at first, but gradually increasing, and the events which then happened may be lightly touched, but merit no particular or laborious enquiry." What extraordinary concatenation of events and ideas conspired to blind the eyes of these two historians to the vast constitutional importance of the reign of David I., I am utterly at a loss to imagine. No doubt their remarks on this head reflect the temper, and reveal the learning of the time in which these authors lived. The writings of Sir Walter Scott also bear eloquent testimony in many of their historical passages to the strength and prevalence of the false historical notions which then obtained, even amongst the learned, and did not a little to increase their popularity in the novelist's day, as well as to ensure their acceptance by posterity. Nevertheless, it cannot but seem surprising to our own age, that so industrious and accomplished an historian as Dr Robertson should have been content to pass over the reign of David I. as meriting "no particular or laborious enquiry." The causes and con-

¹ "The history of Scotland may properly be divided into four periods. The first reaches from the origin of the monarchy to the reign of Kenneth II. The second from Kenneth's conquest of the Picts to the death of Alexander III. The third extends to the death of James V. The last from thence to the accession of James VI. to the crown of England."—*History of Scotland*.

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sequences of the introduction of feudalism into Scotland constitute, surely, an historical theme of the greatest importance. The observation has been made that Scotland has no constitutional history worthy of serious consideration. If we exclude "particular and laborious enquiry" into the beginnings of feudalism in our country, doubtless the field of investigation presented to us in that event would be narrowed to the very meanest proportions, and would be scarce worth examining.

David I. was educated at the Norman court of England, and to that circumstance is to be ascribed his subsequent conversion to the feudal faith. He introduced the charter into his native country, and devoted all his talents and energies to the propagation of the new system of governance. "It was his object," says Mr Robertson, "to *introduce*, but not to *enforce* feudal tenure; to tolerate, rather than to *perpetuate*, Scottish service." These, indeed, judging by the whole tenor of his conduct, and the character of his reign, appear to have been his principal aims; but it has to be observed that his moderation and evident desire to combine the character of reformer with that of father and protector of his people were followed by consequences just as important and far-reaching as any that could have issued from the employment of arms and confiscation as the principal means to establish his reforms. There was an easy agreement and a natural affinity between feudalism and David's Norman auxiliaries on the one hand, and between feudalism and non-native manners and customs on the other, which united to bring about not the least considerable of the many important social changes

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that took place in Scotland in consequence of the introduction of the feudal rule. The language of the court of David I. was probably Norman-French; that of Alexander III. was certainly so; but the temporary ascendancy acquired by the French tongue cannot be regarded otherwise—considering the peculiar situation in which our country was placed—than as a preparatory step to the eventual adoption of the speech of the Lothians as the principal language of the Court. In fine, when feudalism came in at the door, “ancient custom” or Celticism prepared to depart by the window. The feudal tenure introduced an Anglicising tendency into Scotland, which is not surprising if we consider that it was from England that, so far as this kingdom was concerned, that particular system of government hailed. The social effects of the introduction of the charter were speedily seen. The native proprietary soon began to lay aside their Gaelic patronymics, and to name themselves after their estates.¹ Next, the Gaelic language, manners, and customs were discarded, and the corresponding feudal

¹ “The race of Morgan and other families of native origin which formed the strength of the Earldom of Buchan under the Comyns, losing the recollection of their earlier names as the progress of feudal tenure changed them into knights, and squires, and men-at-arms, came to be known from their property instead of from their descent, and gradually forgot, in the same manner, the language of their early ancestry in the speech which has now spread over nearly the whole of Scotland.”—*Early Kings*. The curious in such matters may actually watch this singular process of change in actual operation, as it were, by consulting the successive charters published in such works as Lawrie's *Early Scottish Charters*, and the same author's *Annals of the Reigns of Malcolm and William*.

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"values" usurped their room. Soon, too, this singular process of change, inaugurated by the measures of David I., was carrying on all through feudalised or lowland Scotland. The proprietary constituted the class which was first exposed to the powerful Anglicising influence imported into the country through the channel of feudalism; but the example afforded by the upper classes in this respect was by no means confined to their own order. The commons, seduced by their social superiors, soon caught the infection. Great numbers Anglicised their names, and otherwise testified their adherence to the new customs. The country people in the remoter districts of the lowlands still largely adhered to the language and habits of their ancestors; but the vast majority of the inhabitants of the districts adjacent to the towns, as those of these latter themselves, soon followed the example of the proprietary in laying aside "ancient custom," and discarding the use of the Gaelic tongue. So time passed away, and after the Scottish dialect of English—"quaint Inglis," as it was then styled in contradistinction to "Scots" or the "Scottish language," which was the Gaelic—had penetrated pretty well all over the eastern and northern lowlands, the inhabitants of these districts, "forgetting the language of their forefathers, called all who spoke it *Erse* or Irish. The mountaineers were looked upon as an Irish race, and at length the very citadel and stronghold of *Albann's* Gaelic kings was supposed to have been peopled by a race akin to the population of the Lothians—though totally unknown to Beda."¹ The

¹ *Early Kings.*

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Gaelic language and "ancient custom" were indeed "driven out" from the lowlands, "but surely not the men."¹

Thus David, whose intentions, doubtless, were of the best and whose measures were uniformly moderate, bequeathed to his kingdom, not peace, but a sword. This prince it was who, by the introduction of the feudal system, made straight the way for the subsequent distinctions of "highlands" and "lowlands," and who was primarily responsible for the later division of the inhabitants of Scotland into "highlanders" and "lowlanders"—arbitrary and purely artificial distinctions, so far as they regard *race*, which involved our country in much misery and bloodshed, and which have been a pregnant source of enmity, jealousy, prejudice, and misunderstanding, ever since the time in which they were first set on foot. The bitter rivalry between "ancient custom" and feudalism was a source of constant friction, and an enduring cause of weakness to the whole kingdom. The chronic state of unrest in which that part of Scotland which refused to subscribe to feudalism subsisted, as the successive spoils and depredations committed in the low countries by the clans inhabiting the mountainous districts, are only to be explained on the hypothesis that the Gaelic-speaking people resented the subjugation of so large and so wealthy a part of the country by the Anglicising ideas introduced into Scotland by the measures of King David, and that they were determined that if they could not recover, at least they should be free to use as their own, that which the change of policy in question had

¹ *Early Kings.*

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caused to be separated from the ancient polity and the national manners and customs of the kingdom.¹ The common idea that the frequent feuds between highlanders and lowlanders were largely, if not entirely, inspired and precipitated by sentiments of racial animosity cannot obtain the least sanction from the ethnological history of our country; and, for the same reason, the pleadings of those who seek to affirm the existence of strong temperamental differences between the Gaelic-speaking Scot of the highlands and the supposed Teutonic inhabitant of the plains, may safely be dismissed as being the consequences of a set of preconceived opinions, touching the early history of Scotland, which are destitute of all foundation in fact. Whatever temperamental difference there may be between the Gael on the one hand, and the English-speaking Celt of the lowlands on the other, is due, not to any difference of race, but to the greatly dissimilar political, social, and other conditions under which they respectively lived, and, in a measure, continue to subsist. The fact that, whilst the one speaks the ancient national language of his country, the speech of the other is that which followed in the wake of the feudal system, may be regarded as sufficient to account for any seeming temperamental differences which the casual observer may be moved to descry as the result of a comparison between the

¹ In one of his "Memorials" Wade, of road-making fame, states that the highlanders of his day regarded the lowlands as their own, and excused their depredations on that ground. This superstition amongst them clearly points to a period when the low countries were inhabited by a Gaelic-speaking people.

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character of the Gaelic speaker and that of the non-Gaelic speaker—the genius of the one language being so greatly removed from that of the other.¹

I submit, therefore, in conclusion, that those are in the wrong who affirm that the history of the highlands in relation to the lowlands consists of a lengthy and stormy record of the struggles of Celt and Teuton for supremacy in Scotland. I make bold to affirm that this alleged racial struggle is a myth;² and that

¹ The above remarks are, of course, based on the assumption that both highlanders and lowlanders are (mainly) of Celtic blood, and seek not to discount the discovery of variations of character and temperament in regard to the different racial constituents of the whole Celtic people. The Celt of the eastern lowlands of Scotland differs considerably, temperamentally, from the Gael of the west; but it should be remembered that whilst the original of the one is principally Pictish, that of the other is mainly Gaelic. There is, of course, an analogous difference between the speech of the P. and that of the Q. Celts; yet both these forms of speech belong to the Celtic group of languages. The marked difference between the national character of the Scots and that of the Irish (both mainly Celtic nations) is, perhaps, to be accounted for by the greater infusion of pre-Celtic blood in the population of Ireland; or, failing that, by reason of the fact that whilst Scotland is, mainly, Brythonic, Ireland (where Celtic) is Gadelic, in blood. Regarded as a whole, Scotland belongs, by blood, to Brythonic stock, though the national language is Gaelic.

² At the battle of Harlaw (1411) Donald of the Isles, at the head of a numerous body of Gaelic-speaking Scots, was defeated, or at all events checked, by a lowland army in command of Sir Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar. Burton, and other of our historians, hail this event as a military success gained by Teutonic "law and order" over the undisciplined levies of "Celtic barbarism"; but this view is altogether modern and specious, and derives no sanction whatever from contemporary accounts of the battle. Donald's object was, not to subvert feudalism, but to enforce his claim to the Earldom of Ross,

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Mr Robertson was right in regarding the "Theory of Displacement," on which belief in it is manifestly based, as a bubble not worth the uncritical breath that went to its making. The real struggle in Scotland is, as it has consistently been, ever since the introduction of the feudal system into our country, between Celticism on the one hand and feudalism on the other—between the native culture and the foreign manners and customs which David and his Norman friends brought with them from the English Court. And, until this long-standing feud and the mutual antagonisms arising therefrom have been brought to some accommodation, I submit that it is misleading

of which dignity he considered that he had been unjustly deprived. As to the *racial* complexion of the opposing armies, it may safely be said that it was just as Celtic on the one side as it was on the other. Possibly, the highland host was, by blood, the less Celtic of the two, as Donald's army was mainly recruited in the Isles, where the Norse element was, and is, very pronounced. Mar's force, on the other hand, was composed of the gentry of the districts in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen and their personal followers—levies, that is to say, drawn from the heart of the ancient Pictish kingdom. The battle was an isolated incident in the long struggle between Celticism and feudalism, but there is no evidence to show that when Donald set out from the Isles to claim the Earldom of Ross, he deliberately designed to provoke such a conflict. So far, too, as the rival leaders are concerned, the charge of "barbarism" is much more proper to be charged upon the eldest natural son of the Wolf of Badenoch ("a young man of wild tendencies and a leader of caterans"), than it can justly be laid at the door of Donald of the Isles, whose reputation for humanity and politeness stood high with his contemporaries. Doubtless, the lowland gentry in Mar's army were English speakers, with bilingual admixtures, but to many of the rank and file of the feudal array Gaelic must have been their one and only language.

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to enlarge, as certain of our modern historians are prone to do, on the "making" of Scotland, as a consequence of the revolutionary measures embraced by David I. How can that country, consistently with reason, be regarded as "made" whose divisions, artificial though in certain important particulars they may safely be pronounced to be, have not been erased since the time when the separating cause was first introduced? The two rival cultures still divide Scotland. On the side of feudalism, or rather its modern out-growth, Anglicisation, are, undoubtedly, the "big battalions"—all the machinery of modern civilisation, immense credit, vast resources, and almost unlimited dispensing power, together with a numerous host of auxiliaries, consisting of those powerful "vested interests" which monopoly, extending over a long period of time, and unbridled ascendancy have raised up, and which prejudice, united to widespread ignorance of the early history of Scotland, have conspired to render still more formidable. But the opposing principle, though relatively weak as regards the number of its existing supporters, yet has strong claims upon the allegiance of the people of this country. The Celtic culture takes its rise from the soil of Scotland, and bears the indelible impress of the collective genius of the nation. To the Anglicising tendencies of the new feudalism, it opposes a body of beliefs and aspirations which are drawn from the purest native sources, and whose acceptance and prosecution on the part of the modern nation would result in a revolution as striking and as epoch-making as that which attended the success of the measures embraced by King David. In the

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foregoing observations, I have briefly endeavoured to show that this, the less popular and the less favoured of the two rival cultures, carries an appeal which is just as capable of being addressed to the lowlander as it is fit to be urged in the interests of the highlander. Hitherto, what is called the "Celtic Renaissance" has been confined to the Gaelic-speaking parts of the kingdom. It is now time for that movement to descend from the hills, and to endeavour to interest the English-speaking Celt of the plains in the manners and the customs of his pre-feudalised forefathers.

R. ERSKINE.



The Piper of Laments



ROUND the foot of Beinn a' Bhuird lies Gleann Amhuinn, the finest glen in Gaeldom. The winds blow through it ranting and cruel in winter, but in summer they are as soft as a lover's kiss on the lips. You may lie by the hour in the birch-scented air, listening to the Amhuinn leaping from rock to rock in the linn, and to the sound of a score of burns that dash down to join it; and when the wild bee is humming on the heather and the air dancing with summer heat, if you put your head to the ground, and if you are a lucky one, you will hear the Good People below at their work and merriment. There is no saying what you may learn at a time like that, perhaps a fairy tune that will waken strange thoughts in men's breasts, or perhaps you may learn why the *ùraisg* fled from Amhuinn, and the Kelpie's Hole is safe for the traveller this day. If you should hear about the Piper of Laments, you are lucky indeed. My grandfather, who took the road of us all close on fifty years ago, lay down on the hillside once and heard part of the story—whether it was from the Good People he could not tell—but it ended suddenly the way a pleasant dream will do, and, though he tried many and many a time again, he never heard the bit he longed to hear.

But here, at least, is all that he knew.

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Gleann Amhuinn in old days was a glen of broken folk. There were Red MacGregors in it from the west country, there were MacKenzies and MacIntoshes, and some unquiet Gordons from the east, not to speak of many that owned no clan and had no other name than Donn or Mór, or whatever was notable about themselves. Yet in time, they mingled well and, though the fighting was usually forced on them, they could muster strong for *creach* or war, tall fellows and thin, but tough, tough in that place where targes were dunted the hardest. Past number were the tulzies they had with the thieving Lochaber kern, and seldom indeed was the spoil ever carried far away. You have doubtless heard of Proud Archie—but that is a story for another time.

Into this glen on a day in summer a piper came walking, a sad-eyed man like one that had shouldered a heavy burden of care. The first to see him was Dol Garbh, who dwelt at the side of the linn, but from what direction the piper came, Dol had no idea.

"It's hot for the travelling," said Dol.

"Hot, hot," answered the piper. "This is Gleann Amhuinn?"

"Aye," said Dol, and, though he would have given the dirk he took from the Crooked Cameron the year before to know, he was too mannerly to ask the piper's name. And no one was ever the wiser about that.

The piper went on, and he looked the glen up and down from the top of Beinn a' Bhuird to the depths of Amhuinn, then, without a word to anybody, took up his dwelling on a wooded knoll at the waterside.

There were already pipers enough in the glen:

The Piper of Laments

Finlay, son of Finlay, one of the best Patrick Mór MacCruimen ever taught, Lachlan MacGregor almost as good, and a family at Corriemullan, all of them with nimble fingers on the chanter holes. As the way of pipers is, they were none too kindly disposed to the new one.

"Nobody knows his tartan," they said, "or where he came from. As like as not he is but a wandering tinker."

But one morning before the dew was lifted from the birch and the bracken for all the sun's cajoling, Finlay passed by the stranger's door. The stranger was seated on a stone playing the chanter, and Finlay—and he was a proud one—stopped to listen.

"Honest man," he said at last when the ground-work was finished the second time, "That's a tune I never heard before, and I've been in Skye."

"It's not a MacCruimen tune or a MacArthur tune, and thou'rt little likely to have heard it, for it's my own putting together."

"Thy own!" cried Finlay in amaze. "Then Patrick Mór is but a bairn beside thee! What name is on the tune?"

"Ah," said the other, looking up with a wistful look in his eyes, "I never put a name on it. This day's the first I've played it, but it'll need no name, for I'll not play it again. It's not the tune I'm seeking."

"Man," cried Finlay, "thou art the strange one indeed! There's not a piper like me in all the east country, but I would be proud to make a tune like yon."

"It's not the tune I'm seeking," the other repeated.

"What's the tune thou'rt seeking?" asked Finlay.

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"How can I tell thee? I'm seeking a tune, but what one I know not or whether ever I'll find it."

"Thou hast heard the new tune of Patrick Mór?" asked Finlay after a pause. "It has a masterly turn in the variations."

"I've heard it, but it's a salute, and I've played neither salute nor gathering for a score of years. It's a lament that my heart is crying out for."

So from that day the stranger without a name was known in Gleann Amhuinn as the Piper of Laments.

He went little among his neighbours, but almost as soon as the sun glinted down the side of Creag a' Chait in the morning, he might be heard, and when gloaming had been swallowed in darkness, the sound of mournful piobaireachd sought deep and far into the lonely corries and up to the high-set sheilings.

"Weesht," Finlay would say suddenly to Lachlan MacGregor or some of the Corriemullan fellows, and they would stop in the middle of "The Glen is Mine," or "The End of the Little Bridge," to listen to the Piper of Laments along the waterside. "Hark, it's like the wind blowing through the hair of a hero dead in his prime, and the blood soaking his plaid. And it's different from last night's tune. O man, just listen to the *ceitherlugh* how it rises and falls like a river at Lammas!"

The pipers would stand till the playing ceased, and somehow there would be no more of the proud tunes heard in the glen that night.

At times the Piper of Laments spoke a little of himself, but scanty enough was all the information that

The Piper of Laments

people could gather. He was from one of the western isles half-way over to Tir nan Og, the Land of Youth, and had wandered far and long in the rough bounds of Gaeldom and outside of them, without so much as a sword to be his passport among the wild clans. But his name and his own clan no one knew.

"He's under spells," Seonaid Gordon would say, and, since she was wise, the folks of Gleann Amhuinn took her way of it.

So the Piper of Laments lived there for a year. But on a day of days when the clouds were heavy, and the wind gathering at the back of the hills for the first winter storm, no sound of piobaireachd was heard as before, and no smoke rose from the piper's bothy. The door was wide open to wind and rain, but folk passing could see no one inside. Finlay, son of Finlay, with a bundle of withes in each oxters for bedding, halted in some doubt, thinking hard.

"He was always the strange one and proud, but maybe illness is come on him, and for the sake of his splendid piping, I must go to see," and he set down the withes and went in.

But never a soul was in the bothy, and everything was in its place. Even the small chanter was lying on the table, and only the great pipe was gone.

"'Ille," cried Finlay, more for the sake of hearing his own voice than for an answer, "where art thou?" But no answer broke the silence.

"It's strange indeed," thought Finlay. "However, he'll be back at night no doubt," and out he went and took the path down the glen, still thinking hard.

"Here's the unco happening," he cried in at the

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door of Seonaid Gordon. "The Piper of Laments has gone off."

"Wasn't I telling thee," said Seonaid, "that he was *fo gheasan*, that he was under spells? Maybe he was a prince that some giant bewitched like the handsome one in the *ceilidh* tales. But of this be sure, Finlay, son of Finlay, that he'll be seen no more in Gleann Amhuinn."

Over many a peat fire that night folk talked of the Piper of Laments, recalling his curious ways and the tunes he played.

"Little doubt he's gone for ever," they said, "but where in the south, or the north, or the east, or the west is he gone! It's hard to tell. Heavy is the heart of the seeker!"

Next morning when the mist tumbled before the wind, the way the Lochaber kern were wont to flee the Gleann Amhuinn broadswords, many an eye was on the bothy; but there was neither smoke nor sign of life, and morning after morning it was the same, till folks ceased to talk and wonder.

At last one day Finlay went to the hills seeking venison for winter, and, being as cunning on the track of the deer as at piobaireachd, he crossed Creag a' Chait, took through the wood at the back of it, and down by Gleann Odhar to a place where there was always a stag to be seen. On this day there was not a living thing in that glen.

"Where in all the far places of the hills can they be?" Finlay asked himself, and held on with a watchful eye on hill and haugh and corrie.

About midday he came to the black little glen where no one likes to venture for fear of the old witch woman

The Piper of Laments

that abides there in the mist. A drizzle of rain began to fall and the hunter stopped. Everything was glowering, gloomy, and he crossed himself, muttering an ancient rhyme against evil.

"Here's a place I've no notion of," he said, drawing his plaid tight about his shoulders. "A place as grim——"

All at once on the thin breeze came a sound, not of deer hoofs or grouse whirring, but of piobaireachd, soft and distant.

"God, God!" cried Finlay, all a-tremble, "What's yon?"

Down and up, and up and down went the tune, sad and awesome to hear, sometimes loud, sometimes almost lost, a tune to make a man feel within him the essence of all sorrow and pain that ever was. "The Fairy Wife's Lament" may bring tears, but yon tune!

Then it stopped.

Finlay leaped forward up the glen, his dirk—the Holy Iron—clenched in his hand.

"There's no *cailleach* will be able to withstand thee," he cried wildly to the long blade, "and the piper that played yon I must see, though it's death to do it."

He ran to the head of the glen, but no one was there. He stopped again—and far away the piobair-eachd began afresh.

"Sorrow of heaven," it said, "sorrow of the great world and of hell, things that tear strong hearts, things unknown, unspeakable, that steal away the reason of man."

Again it stopped, and again Finlay pursued it madly. But he who played it was not for seeing; and at the

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end of a long day, and darkness gathering, and the mist swirling from who knows where, Finlay gripped his dirk more tightly and fled home to Gleann Amhuinn. Behind a hill the piobaireachd sounded faintly.

He stumbled into the house of Seonaid Gordon, and with the peat glow lighting up the horror on his face, told her what he had heard.

"Just man," she said at last, "knowest thou who it was?—the Piper of Laments."

"I knew it," cried Finlay, "but O God, the tune!"

"Was it the tune he sought for, thinkest thou?" asked Seonaid in a low voice.

"Ah, woman," Finlay answered, "deep, deep was the sorrow in it, but I think it was not the tune. He stopped it often like a man distracted. Poor searching one!"

And there is all that my grandfather heard. Yet many a time when we were out at the peats, he would set down the spade and say he heard the sound of piobaireachd far off.

"Is it the Piper of Laments, 'ille, and he still seeking?"

You will be the lucky one if you learn from the folk that dwell in fairy knolls, or from the other hidden folk so numerous in hills and lonely places, what was that piper's clan, what was the tune he sought, and whether he found it ere riever Death took him in the foray there's no resisting.

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